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THE NATIONAL REVIEW.

OCTOBER 1861.

ART. I.—PRINCIPLE AND NO-PRINCIPLE IN FOREIGN POLICY.

England and Europe: a Discussion of National Policy. By Alfred H. Louis. London: Bentley, 1861.

A few Words on Non-Intervention. "Fraser's Magazine," December 1859. By J. S. Mill. Parker and Bourne.

The Principle of Non-Intervention: a Lecture. By Montague Bernard, M.A., Professor of International Law, &c., Oxford. 1861.

THERE are few more incongruous or disappointing spectacles on earth than a great nation without a great policy. It is a power without a purpose; a gigantic body without a guiding intellect or an inspiring soul; a drifting, not a steering, ship. Now, the policy of a nation may lack grandeur in two ways,—it may be either unworthy or unfixed; it may have no definite and steady aims at all, or those aims may be low and selfish; its goal may be indistinct, or its desires may be mean, or its volition may be feeble. In each and all of these cases, it is beneath its destiny, and a recreant from its duty. A nation that is purely egotistical in its foreign relations can neither be loved nor respected, for it has no social virtues; and, however boundless its resources, it must be weak in the day of trial, for it will have no friends. A nation that is fluctuating and capricious in its action, from the want of settled principles or clear objects, may have great power, but can have neither dignity nor influence; it cannot sway others, for it does not know itself; its efforts are thrown away from the lack of persistency and convergence; it can exercise no leadership, for it can inspire no confidence; its friends can never securely count upon its aid; its enemies can always calculate upon its caprices, and play upon its irresolution; unstable as water, it must be content to see far weaker states, if endowed

with clearer vision and a stronger will, overbear it in council, and dictate the terms of treaties and the division of the spoil.

The comfort of statesmen, too, as well as the worth and dignity of states, would seem to dictate the establishment of distinct and settled principles of foreign policy. When these have once become so decided and notorious as to be entitled to the name of "national," the work of statesmanship is comparatively easy: it is reduced to the condition of a science to be studied, and an art to be acquired; all then needed in the rulers of the nation are, thorough mastery of facts and circumstances, fertility of resources, readiness of wit, timely firmness, and timely flexibility. The aim is uniform; the pole-star is always the same, and always visible; the maxims of action are laid down, and the only task is to apply them,—to determine how the national purpose can be best attained; to pronounce *what* our principles say ought to be done, and *how* prudence and means say it is to be done.

Has our country this dignified position? Have our statesmen this supreme comfort, this unspeakable relief? Surely not. We need not waste much time in proving that England does not possess any clear, intelligible, unswerving principles of foreign policy, nor in tracing this want to its cause. The fact, unhappily, is as indisputable as the explanation is obvious and simple.

In the last century—in most, indeed, of our recent history, down to the last generation and the last war—we had what might almost be called a steady national policy. Our course, indeed, was not always consistent; our proceedings were not always defensible; our means were not always either wise or righteous; but at least we had certain tolerably well-defined and persistent purposes in view. We had to make head against our only two real rivals and competitors, France and Spain; we had to thwart, to circumvent, to fight, sometimes one, sometimes the other, sometimes both united; we had to watch and defeat their intrigues, and to prevent or to counterbalance any increase of territory or of power they might obtain. They were really our only enemies—almost our only external anxieties; for Russia was not yet, Holland had nearly ceased to be, America was still our dependency, and Austria was habitually our ally, and never our competitor. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, France was our rival in European influence, and the disturber of our peace at home; Spain was our enemy in distant quarters, and our rival as a great naval and colonising power. In the early portion of the nineteenth century, new elements of international discord came into play, and new states rose into eminence and influence; but it so happened that France became the centre and embodiment of all the hostile forces, so that our old traditional policy of humbling and antagonising France remained as

instinctive and predominant as ever. Throughout all these periods, too, one national idea continued paramount and governing—the maintenance of our maritime supremacy, as connected with the multiplication of our colonies and the extension of our commerce. We sought for no European territory: any thing we desired or acquired in that direction was merely for military stations, fortresses, and harbours of refuge for our naval and mercantile interests; but we pursued the aggrandisement of our remote colonial empire with a zeal and pertinacity almost amounting to a passion; nearly all our wars originated, directly or indirectly, out of this national pursuit; nearly all our treaties of peace terminated in some fresh acquisitions in the eastern or western hemisphere; we appropriated dependencies here, we founded settlements there; and all with the one pertinacious and inspiring notion of creating customers to whom we could sell, and from whom we could buy, to the exclusion of all other nations—of monopolising, in a word, as far as possible, the commerce of the world. This might not be a very generous or noble aim; there may have lurked—indeed we have now recognised that there undoubtedly did lurk—a fallacy at the very root of it; but still it was sufficiently distinct, persistent, intelligible, religiously believed in, and unanimously adopted by the nation, to be a guide, a soul, a backbone to our foreign policy. There was a port for the helmsman to steer for—a land with whose gorgeous beauty and magnificence the crew could inflame their fancies and reward their toils—a compass by which, as by an unquestioned creed, the captain could direct his course. The English, as a people, knew what they wished for and strove for, and never doubted for a moment that it deserved all their yearnings and all their efforts.

Now all this is changed; and the change has not been adequately realised, studied, or accepted. The old maxims have been rudely shaken, if not utterly upset, by modern economic doctrines; the old theory of international relations has been strongly complicated by the new political elements which democracy has introduced; the old combinations and alliances have been deranged and perplexed by the fresh states which have risen up into greatness, and forced themselves into the first rank. Economic science has nearly brought us to the conclusion that a vast colonial empire adds much to our burdens and little to our strength; that it multiplies our assailable points, and does not multiply our available forces; that the mother country is compelled to keep a large army and navy in order to defend dependencies which can render her no aid in return when she herself is threatened; that colonies never pay their own expenses; that they are, in fact, simply a brilliant, but a very costly, dia-

mond in the imperial crown of Britain. We have discovered that even India, the grandest and most imposing of them all, contributes nothing to our revenue, and drains away millions from our loan-market; while America, which was comparatively worthless to us as a colony, has become a source of enormously profitable trade as an independent republic. We have begun to discover that colonies are only valuable as countries with which we can have a mutually lucrative interchange of our respective productions, and on which we can pour out our surplus population; and we have learned that we can have both these advantages from them without owning them. For a long series of years we have sent more emigrants to the United States than to either Australia or Canada—or, indeed, than to both together; while our aggregate commerce with that one foreign country is greater than that with all our colonial possessions (except India) combined.* In obedience at once to the doctrines of free trade and of free institutions, we now allow our colonies to deal with foreign nations as unrestrictedly as with ourselves, and to emancipate them as soon as they wish to separate and are able to maintain themselves. In short, while still feeling a natural and honourable pride in the wide range of that colonial empire which we long strove so gallantly and perseveringly to found and to extend,—while still, perhaps, in defiance of reasoning and calculation, cherishing a vague notion that it is a main element in our national grandeur and prosperity, and actually contributes to our power,—we have already deliberately surrendered all those *exclusive* advantages for the sake of which alone we formerly desired it; and we are voluntarily curtailing it year by year,—glad enough to turn anxious, costly, and grumbling dependencies into independent, spontaneous, prosperous, and affectionate allies, kindred in race, analogous in institutions, sympathising in principles and views, but free, because full-fledged.

But this is by no means the only or the most embarrassing novelty. Formerly, in all our foreign relations, we had simply to consider states as states, represented by their governments, embodied in their kings. But the social convulsions and upheavings of the last seventy or eighty years have rendered this unity of conception impossible and deceptive. In many of the chief countries of Europe we have been compelled to perceive and to reckon with—even where diplomatic decencies forbade

* Emigrants in the last fifteen years—

To the North American Colonies	493,797
To Australian Colonies	586,230
To United States	2,350,397
Aggregate trade to United States in 1859	£58,700,000
Ditto, to all British Possessions, exclusive of India	51,000,000

us formally to recognise—the existence of the *people* as well as of the *sovereign*; and often it has been difficult to determine which of the two ought in justice to be treated as *the nation*. Revolutions have multiplied in all directions; and revolutions have become *popular* where they used to be dynastic. Not only have we had rival claimants to various thrones, legitimist and constitutional monarchs, *branche aînée* and *branche cadette*,—we have had cases where the people have declared, and successfully enforced their declaration, that there should be no throne at all. Nations have expelled their sovereigns, established republics, changed them again for empires, for restorations, for repeated governmental experiments of every kind, as in the case of France. They have changed despotisms into constitutions, as in Spain and Portugal, and transferred the crowns from unwilling to willing conceders of democratic rights. They have revolted against unnatural connexions, and severed them asunder, as in the case of the Netherlands. They have seceded in fragments when discontented or oppressed, as in the case of Hungary in 1849, and America to-day. They have dethroned their old rulers, and annexed themselves to a more favoured king, as now in Italy. There has been every conceivable internal change in European countries; and with each change we have had to deal as with a *fait accompli*, if not as a government *de facto*. Formerly wars were between princes and empires; latterly they have been between princes and their own subjects. Formerly kingdom fought with kingdom; now a kingdom is divided against itself. When states were units and fought against each other, we had obvious interests or traditional maxims which determined with which belligerents we should sympathise or side; but when despotic courts and governments, with which we were in amity, were rebelled against and perhaps expelled by insurgent citizens, whose free aspirations and constitutional designs we could not but approve and wish success to, the old principles of policy were no longer adequate or applicable. Yet it is clear to every understanding, that under no circumstances are distinct and settled principles of policy more absolutely indispensable to enable us to steer a worthy and honourable course, than amidst such a series of complications as the revolutionary element has introduced into the commonwealth of nations.

Again, the very multiplication of powerful states—the rise of some and the decay of others—has done much to confuse and perplex the old international relations of England, and to call for a revision of our hereditary maxims. In the last century we had scarcely to think much of any powers except France, Spain, and Austria. Now Spain has ceased to be either formidable or influential; Austria—apparently *in extremis*—has long, at least

as a European empire, been living on the reputation of the past; the weakness of Turkey has become a far greater peril than her greatness ever was, even in her days of conquest; Prussia and Russia have grown into powers of the first magnitude, and the latter has, for at least a generation, given us almost more anxiety than France; while in the western hemisphere a mighty nation has arisen which threatened to give us more trouble and annoyance than any European state, and, in fact, for thirty years has kept us in that condition of hot water which she delights in, and which we detest.

Now, the point on which we wish to fix attention is, that these changes in external facts, this multiplication in the elements of the problem, and this entire subversion of ancient economic doctrines, render it absolutely imperative upon us to reconsider all our maxims of international policy, and to frame new and steady principles of action applicable to the altered world, if we wish either to influence others or to respect ourselves. It will never do to go on repeating the old formulas, talking the old language, running in the old ruts, quoting rules out of which all the meaning has departed, whining after dead and buried possibilities, speaking as if we still believed in the incredible, and hoped for and were intending to attempt the unattainable. We could scarcely need a clearer proof, or a more telling instance of the want of some such revision and reconstruction of our code of foreign policy, than the language and conduct of our ministers at this moment in reference to Austria. According to traditional ideas, Austria is our natural, ancient, and faithful ally, our bulwark against France, a mighty power, a European necessity. This is what Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell *say*, and—do not think, but—have not got out of the habit of fancying they think. But the warmest sympathies of the British nation, and to a certain extent their own, go along with the two provinces which are seeking to release themselves from, and virtually to dismember, this ancient ally and necessary empire—with Hungary in her constitutional claims, with Venice in her intolerable wrongs. The English *ministers* would fain keep Austria erect and complete: the English *people* would fain strip her of her Italian and Magyar subjects, whom she has so robbed and trampled on; and between the two conflicting sentiments, not yet fused into a principle, the English *nation* is vacillating, paralysed, and powerless.

The reason why we are thus, at a most critical conjuncture in the world's affairs, destitute of the guiding-star of a clear and fixed *national* policy, properly so-called, is not far to seek.

It arises from the fact that, politically and nationally, we are in a transition state; that we have among us several conflicting sentiments and opinions, inconsistent even where not absolutely antagonistic, striving for the mastery: those that are dying out still strong in hereditary prepossession; those that are in the ascendant not yet established; those that are to modify and blend with both still crude and nebulous. The decided and admitted victory of one set of views, or the harmonious fusion of them all, must be effected before Great Britain can possess a distinct foreign policy, by which we can regulate our action, and which other nations can comprehend and count upon; and both the victory and the fusion must be the work of time.

It is inherently difficult for a free country to have a definite and persistent foreign policy, except in circumstances where surrounding dangers and material interests dictate its course too obviously for mistake, and where weakness permits not even a momentary vacillation or aberration. This difficulty is enhanced in the precise proportion in which the government is really and faithfully parliamentary; and it reaches its culminating point when the democracy is powerful, and when parties are evenly balanced. The more completely domestic questions are settled, the more will foreign questions be made the battlefield of faction; different political doctrines must be put forward by the competitors for office while in opposition, and maintained to a certain extent for decency's sake, if not from conviction, when they are in power. The external action of the nation will therefore fluctuate within certain limits according to the ministry which happens to hold the reins for the time being; and the *range* of these limits will be determined by the degree to which the people are decided or unanimous in their sentiments; while upon the extent of this range will depend the *consistency*, and therefore the influence for good or evil, of the national action. If the people are nearly equally divided, or very indefinite, or very indifferent as to foreign politics, a change of ministry may cause such a change of external action as utterly to neutralise the nation's power, and deplorably to impair its character and stain its honour. If, on the contrary, the people have a tolerably consentaneous and positive opinion, a change of ministry may be felt only in the greater or less degree of spirit and energy which it may infuse or display.

Again, in a practically parliamentary government like ours, the external action of the country is perplexed and hampered by another influence. Ministers can seldom, except in very extraordinary crises, speak or act with a due degree of confidence and decision. They can only promise what they know they can perform; they can only venture to threaten

what they know they will be permitted to inflict; they can only undertake what they know the country will enable them to carry out. Now, over all these things, there must generally hang some degree of uncertainty: a fresh election may weaken their hands, and compel some modification of their course; a bad harvest or bad trade may intervene, and render heavy taxes and large expenditure less endurable; and a popular assembly never can be expected to manifest the same persistency in its views, or the same resolute pertinacity in its exertions and its sacrifices, that may fairly be demanded from an aristocracy. Fatigue ensues, doctrines alter, principles progress, discussion gradually modifies the public sentiment and sympathy, and we are in danger of backing discreditably out of enterprises into which we have rushed courageously.

At present we are suffering from *all* these causes of feebleness and incoherence. We are in a state of conflict, and we are in a state of transition. As regards the maxims of our international policy, we have drifted away from our old moorings, and we have not yet fairly grappled to any others. We have among us, also, three sets of notions, more or less incongruous, among which our allegiance is as yet wavering. Our leading statesmen hold one, though falteringly; the great body of the people hold another, though somewhat doubtfully, and more with the heart than with the head; while certain economists hold a third, and hold it with a zealous and aggressive dogmatism which goes far to make amends for the scantiness of their numbers and the narrowness of their creed. The statesman's doctrine—the traditional policy of which Lord Palmerston may be accepted as the embodiment and exponent—is that England, holding the foremost rank in the commonwealth of nations, being connected with most by engagements, and with all by interests or sympathies, must of necessity take part in every great movement, direct or influence the course of every international controversy, have, in fact, diplomatically or materially, a finger in every European, American, African, or Asiatic pie. The Premier clings to old alliances, to time-honoured combinations,—to the ancestral machine, in short; he would keep the members of the European Areopagus much as they were, but is not very averse to the introduction of any new element, or any reasonable modification of forms and proceedings, provided only the old edifice remains; he rushes frantically in to darn any rent, to stop any gap, but will not face the idea of abolition or reconstruction in any shape: any thing *that can be fitted in* is permissible; any thing that is inherently antagonistic is the unclean thing—*anathema maranatha*. He supports constitutional monarchy wherever it can assert its own existence; encourages free institutions

where they do not threaten to end in republican or socialistic experiments; does usually what he has been in the habit of doing for fifty years; thwarts France about the Suez Canal, because he has a traditional dread of her influence in the Levant; keeps Turkey on her legs, and tries to persuade himself and others that those dead bones can live,—not because he conscientiously believes so, but because he cannot see what would be done when the Ottoman Empire crumbles to pieces, and shrinks with natural laziness from the laborious problem and the contingent chaos. He abhorred and condemned the autocratic tyrannies of Italy, because England has always hated oppression and favoured constitutionalism; yet he remonstrated against that only foreign aid that could ever have set Italy free, because he deprecated a war which might spread, and dreaded equally a result which might render Austria helpless, or a result which might crush Italy into still deeper misery. He protested against the annexation of Savoy and Nice, because the territorial aggrandisement of France has always been an hereditary bugbear,—and here his course, therefore, was clear. Free Italy he could rejoice in, for his sympathies are with humanity and justice; but united Italy was a phenomenon which startled him, for it did not readily fit into the old European chess-board; he fancied a *dual* Italy would have been more manageable and less disturbing to his dusty and dog-eared map, and put forward his Foreign Secretary to utter a posthumous sigh over the futile scheme. A powerful nation in the peninsula was the very thing wanted for the practical realisation of his own end; but it was a means altogether new as well as grand, and his imagination, therefore, could not grasp it; it would have involved a rearrangement of his national and dynastic forces, and his unenterprising conservatism therefore would not face it. He never dreams of striking out any magnificent, consistent, vivifying conception; he “stands upon the old way;” he administers the old routine—with spirit and with skill, no doubt; he upholds the existing *régime* of the world, but would willingly reform it, so far as reform did not entail remodelling. This is what we call the *traditional* policy of Britain, and, with slight variations, it is the policy of all our ministers.

The *popular* policy—of which Mr. Louis may be regarded as the most earnest and eloquent exponent that has yet appeared—is far truer in conception and far nobler in spirit; and, with all its rashness and its crudity, probably more consistent and more safe. The popular instinct is right, though the popular ignorance is great. The English people are easily roused to abhorrence of injustice and oppression exercised against others as against themselves, and they sympathise cor-

dially with all attempts on the part of other nations to conquer those liberties for which they themselves so gallantly contended. They would willingly aid, as well as encourage, all who are struggling for rational rights, or insurgent against real wrongs, provided neither religion, property, nor order are assailed by the revolutionists. They have, too, a strong though an inarticulate conviction that a generous, will in the end be wiser and safer than a selfish, policy; that earnest sympathy wins more strength, because more friends, than cautious isolation; that free nations with free institutions must, as a rule, be the natural and the permanent allies and well-wishers of England; and that the time may come ere long when, in spite of our pride and our might, our courage and our wealth, we shall need all the sincere and hearty auxiliaries that we can summon round us. In this our people are wiser than our ministers; for these, by an unstable policy, make enemies and alienate friends on both sides; they perpetually irritate despots by avowing their sympathy with insurgent patriots, and disappoint insurgent patriots by obstinately confining this sympathy to words, out of deference to the oppressors, who at once hate us for our sentiments and despise us for our inaction.

Finally comes the third party, of whom Mr. Bright is the fitting spokesman,—the advocates of economy and isolation, who admit neither indignation at the wrongs nor enthusiasm for the rights of citizens in other lands; who know that sympathy is often costly, and maintain that it is usually misplaced; who proclaim that between foreign controversialists we cannot judge, and ought not to interfere; who believe that to be rich is to be strong, that to be passive is to be secure; that, both as Christians and as men of business, the wise and righteous course is to buy and sell and get gain, to let fools and sinners fight and weaken each other, to turn a blind eye to the crimes of the wrong-doer, and a deaf ear to the groans of the tortured and the crushed. These reasoners, in spite of their unamiable doctrines, have just enough truth on their side to secure a hearing, and at times an influence. Our interventions *have* often been ineffectual, often imprudent, often on behalf of the unworthy or the ungrateful; intervention is always costly; war is usually both a folly and a sin; taxation is a heavy burden on the poor, and charity should, as a rule, begin at home.

Now the actual foreign policy of England—or rather her external action, for it can scarcely be entitled a policy—is a compound, or rather an alternation, of all these influences. Any one of the theories, consistently followed out, would give us a steady and intelligible course of action; the mixing of them, or the adoption of each in turn, gives nothing but feebleness and

vacillation. Sometimes one view is in the ascendant, sometimes another; more often each has just sufficient power to modify and confuse the others; not unfrequently the ministers, who speak in the name of the nation, hold a language to foreign states which the Houses of Parliament, who determine the proceedings of the nation, do not encourage, or will not permit them to carry out in deeds. Lord John Russell, with his spirit and his sympathy with freedom, writes energetic despatches at the Foreign Office; Mr. Bright, with his narrow parsimony, does much to tie up the purse-strings and to chill the generous feelings of the nation,—at all events he succeeds in impressing on the governments of other countries the conviction that the language of the ministers is that of a party only, and not of the people. Thus the trumpet gives forth an uncertain sound, which fails alike to intimidate our enemies, to reassure our friends, or to inspirit our own forces. We incur, too, reproaches on the score of duplicity and perfidy,—vices the most alien from our nature; yet we are unable to say that the reproaches are wholly unreasonable. For the unquestionable and openly expressed sympathy of the nation with the struggling and the oppressed in all quarters, encourages them when disposed for insurrection and resistance; and they not unnaturally conclude, that because they have the good wishes of England, they will have her assistance also. But active aid to insurgents, however just their cause, it is not our practice, and is now against our principles, to render; yet when it is withheld they fancy themselves deserted and betrayed. At the same time, the despots against whom these insurgents rise hate us because we have indorsed the claims of their trampled subjects, and avowed our conviction of the righteousness of their rebellion; and half despise us because we have abstained from intervention, and dealt only in protocols and protests. Thus our policy, even when in the main sound and loyal, not being systematic, distinct, and proclaimed as national, makes many bitter enemies, and few grateful or confiding friends.

It is far easier to establish the fact on which we have been dilating, and to explain its causes, than to point out the remedy. In truth the distinct national policy we need, and from the want of which the influence and the fame of England have suffered so much impairment, can only be established slowly and with difficulty, and through the twofold process of discussion and of action. In both these ways, however, the work is even now going on. Foreign affairs occupy far more of the public attention than they used to do, partly in consequence of their own intrinsic interest, and partly because nearly all our great domestic controversies

have been settled or have died out. Since the Napoleonic wars, at least till the year 1848, Englishmen as a rule, even English politicians, took little heed of what went on abroad; foreign affairs were left to the Foreign Secretary; he alone was considered to be much concerned with them, or to understand them; and the discussions which took place in Parliament when any idiosyncratic member ventured to assail the proceedings of Lord Aberdeen or Lord Palmerston, were usually of a character to confirm both these prevalent impressions. People turned away from debates on Greece, Syria, Tahiti, and Schleswig-Holstein with indifference or with disgust, and took refuge in the more congenial, intelligible, and exciting topics of free trade, suffrage extension, or national education. The columns in the newspapers which contained tidings of other courts and countries were little read, and the system of "Our own correspondents" knew nothing of the portentous development it has since attained. This state of comfortable but not wholesome apathy lasted till the rousing year of 1848. By that time the last great domestic struggle on the Corn Laws was at an end; the direction of our future course on nearly all home matters had been definitely settled; our progress in the way of various practical reforms, though slow and silent, was tolerably steady; and there were few conscious grievances, and no poignant or general distress, to stir the popular mind to any agitation on questions of organic change. Our own affairs became dull just as those of other nations became intensely exciting, and from that date we have thought and felt and talked more of Italy, France, Hungary, Turkey, and America, than of England. In fact, it is not too much to say, that the events which have so crowded upon one another in these countries have concerned us more deeply, as well as interested us more vividly, than any thing which has taken place at home.

The first effect of this sudden awakening to a comparatively new set of subjects has of course been to make us talk considerable nonsense, and urge our ministers to some very questionable steps. We have had to speak and act in matters on which our information was very scanty and our intelligence very little cultivated. We have learned them, as we learn every thing in England, by trying and by blundering. We are doing so still. We are educating ourselves by the not very dignified process—but the very costly one both to ourselves and others—of haranguing and conversing much, and gradually selecting out of the ideas and principles thrown out in speeches and in conversation those which seem soundest or are most congenial; by making great mistakes in action, and studying and profiting by the consequences. The press teems with information from all quarters

—very various, if not always very accurate; every view has its representative and its adherents; ceaseless debates in both Houses of Parliament—often, it must be avowed, displaying singularly shallow and benighted notions on the part of men usually well-principled and well-informed—gradually instruct the public as to facts, and clear its conceptions as to doctrine, and fit it to form opinions somewhat less ignorant and presumptuous than of old. The people are far yet from either thorough knowledge or real wisdom, but they are on the way to both.

All this while, too, it has been impossible to hold our hands. We have had to act as well as discuss. The rapid and impetuous current of events has dragged us into the eddy; and often, with very unsettled views and very indeterminate purpose, we have been compelled to take a prominent share in proceedings pregnant with the vastest issues, and which nothing but the clearest aims and the firmest resolutions could conduct to good. All this action, however, blindfold and staggering though it may be, helps forward the nation towards the formation of a national policy in two modes: it is *experimental*, and by its consequences *instructs* us; and it creates a *precedent*, and therefore *commits* us. Our decision may not always have been very deliberate or very positive, but, once taken and carried out, it determines to a considerable extent our future decisions in analogous cases. We *get into a habit* of acting in a certain way and according to certain maxims; and this habit, half unconsciously, both fixes our policy and rivets our opinions. When we have several times, though on the spur of the moment and because pressed to an immediate resolution, acted in a particular manner, we adopt that manner as a system, and formulise it into a principle.

In this characteristically insular fashion we have now, in spite of Mr. Bright, arrived at two conclusions in reference to our foreign policy. We have reached them, not precisely avowedly nor scientifically, but by such a large majority, by such a general consent expressed in so many informal and spontaneous modes, that we are entitled to consider them as *national* conclusions, and not likely to be largely modified or seriously reconsidered. We have decided against *isolation*, and against *intervention*.

We have abjured the doctrine of indifferent and heartless egotism which a small and shallow school of economists have proposed for the national adoption. We have resolved that we will not, cannot, ought not, to separate ourselves from other nations, and live an unsocial unit amid the universal commonwealth of states. No calculation of cost, no visions of profit, no prognostics of danger, have produced even a momentary wavering in the popular mind as to this decision. We have decided against

isolation in the first place because it is *impossible*. We have so long held a leading place, that we are entangled on every side with engagements and alliances,—often, perhaps, very onerous, and sometimes certainly unwise,—which it would be faithless and disloyal to abandon; and disloyalty is a vice which sophistry and self-interest preach to Englishmen in vain. Our dominions, too, are so widely scattered and so vast, and our connexions every where so complicated, that scarcely any important action of any of the great countries of the world can be without its influence on our prosperity or prospects. We are too great not to be affected by what goes on around us. However much we may murmur at the position, whatever line of policy we might adopt to mitigate the burden, the patent fact remains, and can neither be denied, nor ignored, nor be barren of results,—that one condition of Europe (to say nothing of America or Asia) costs us fifteen millions a year more than another. If our neighbours are pacific, if our influence is great, if our allies are many, cordial, and powerful, if fierce controversies and irritating sores have been healed by justice instead of being merely skinned-over by compromise,—then fifteen millions will suffice for our national defences; if not, we must spend thirty millions. How, then, can we avoid—should we not be fools if we endeavoured to avoid?—labouring to bring about that condition of Europe on which so much of our prosperity and expenditure depends? Is not he the wisest and most patriotic statesman who most unremittingly and most sagaciously devotes his efforts to the attainment of this salutary end? And may not the policy which Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden denounce as so mischievous and costly be in truth—if judiciously pursued—as economical as it is essential?

In the second place, our popular good sense has abjured isolation as *unsafe*. Mr. Louis's argument on this branch of the subject is by far the best and strongest portion of his book, though his applications of it often run into extravagance. England is powerful: considering both her moral and material resources, probably the most powerful nation on the globe. But no nation is powerful enough to be able under all circumstances to stand alone: wealth excites covetousness; greatness begets envy. Strength, indeed, is a certain protection against attack; but the use which has been made of that strength is probably a stimulant to attack even more certain and more active. A mighty empire is sure to have many enemies: it is by no means sure to have many friends; and it is more likely that its enemies will combine to crush it than that its friends will combine to save it. It cannot be prudent in any nation to trust to its own unaided might; least of all in a nation like Great Britain, which has so many vulnerable points, and so many unscrupu-

lous and bitter foes. Why it should be so, why England—whose policy has never been aggressive, and has of late even been ostentatiously generous, and to whom all Europe owes such an unextinguishable debt of gratitude for her unwearied exertions and sacrifices during the Napoleonic wars—should be so virulently hated and so coldly loved as is undoubtedly the case, it is perhaps needless to investigate at any length; probably her virtues and her faults have contributed in a nearly equal proportion to the deplorable result. Her restless and somewhat meddlesome philanthropy, the sincerity of which no foreigners can credit; the tenacity with which she has held her own; the dogged resolution with which she has often interposed to prevent oppression or to baffle conquest; the limits, not always very consistent or very intelligible, within which she has confined these interpositions; the wrongs she has perpetrated, the wrongs she has forbidden, the wrongs she has permitted,—have all, for different reasons and by different parties, been imputed to her as offences, and have awakened the animosity of disappointment or of indignation; while her signal success and her matchless prosperity are, in the eyes of rivals, the greatest crimes of all. The issue of the whole is, that, with the single exception of Portugal, there is perhaps not a nation in the world that would not see our humiliation with joy, and our destruction without regret.

Now assuredly this position is as insecure as it is anomalous and needless. Allies are more necessary to us now than formerly. We are still the richest country in the world, but we are no longer the *one* rich country. France and America, in this respect, are advancing as rapidly as ourselves. The progress of science, while developing our resources with marvellous effectiveness, has cut away several of our exclusive advantages. We have still a superiority in, but no longer a monopoly of, iron and coal. We can never again, by the very nature of things, have the same unquestioned and unapproachable supremacy at sea that we once had. France, Russia, and the United States have vast maritime capacities; and two of them at least are more willing than we are to waste millions in military preparations. Our very progress, too, in one important respect, has diminished our relative, if not our positive, defensive strength. Emigration, the multiplication of railroads, the vast expansion of our manufactures, the unprecedented development of our commerce since free trade became the order of the day, have together absorbed or removed that surplus population from which our soldiers and sailors were recruited; while the exodus from Ireland, following on the famine of 1847,—by the joint operation of which two millions and a half have been swept away,—while redeeming that unhappy land from her dilemma,

has at the same time destroyed that inexhaustible reservoir of men from which our army used to be supplied. Never before did we so need powerful and devoted allies, not so much to help us to fight as to save us from the necessity of fighting. Yet just now our position is such, that the nations that wish us well are few, feeble, and out of reach; while those that wish us ill are mighty, warlike, and at hand. France, Austria, Russia, and America would rejoice to humble and to weaken us. Belgium, Portugal, Turkey, Italy (when constituted), and possibly Prussia, would be, at least passively, our friends. But what effective aid could they afford us?

Now this position we affirm to be an unsafe one. It cannot be consistent either with wisdom or with dignity to hold an isolated place surrounded by foes who hate or envy us, whose combination to injure us might at any time be fatal, and to whose mutual jealousies or animosities we have therefore to trust for safety. Nor is the position any more necessary than desirable. We ought to be, and we might be, so fortified by cordial friends,—by nations that really love us, and by allies whose welfare is bound up with our greatness,—that no foes or combination of foes would dream of harming us. It is true that few peoples, and no great people, hold us in much affection; but in nearly every country there are many who admire and revere England, and who feel that in her prosperity and predominance lie the surest hopes for that liberty and civilisation which they hold so dear. The friends of constitutional and mental freedom in every land must be our friends, whether they have to struggle against despotism and barbarism embodied in an emperor or embodied in a mob; and if we avow the principle of sympathy instead of the principle of isolation as the guide of our policy, we shall at once bind them to us and strengthen their hands, so that they may be able to aid us at our need. Even when not in power, even when outnumbered and oppressed, they will be able so to influence their countrymen and control their government, as to curb and hamper, if not always to forbid, aggressive enterprise against us. Moreover, in spite of national jealousies, in spite of low ambitions, in spite of unwarrantable and unreasoning passions, *as a rule* free states must be our friends, and despots (except transiently and casually) our foes; for the former will have few *avowable* or defensible objects with which we shall come into collision; and in parliamentary governments the voice of sense and justice can always make itself heard, and that voice, we are bold enough to trust, will henceforth be always on our side, since henceforth we shall have no sinister or exclusive interests to serve. With the multiplication and consolidation of free states, therefore, and with the number of those

whom we aid in their righteous self-defence and in their honest efforts after self-development, will our allies and our security increase, if we abjure solitary and unfeeling grandeur, and resolve to be steadily just, generous, and sympathetic. Free states and free parties every where are our outlying entrenchments. By maintaining them we are most surely and most cheaply defending and strengthening ourselves.

But, lastly, the English people have pronounced against a policy of isolation for a third reason, still more conclusive to their minds than the two others, viz. that it is mean and *wrong*. Neither their logic nor their feelings will permit them to adopt the maxims of a school of coarse logic and of narrow feelings, which teach that neighbours have no duties towards each other unless they live within the same geographical boundaries, and are members of the same political combination of units; that, in fact, all those mutual claims and charities, the sacredness of which has been proclaimed by Christian and Pagan moralists alike, apply to fellow-citizens, but not to fellow-men. The British nation is simply *incapable* of saying,—as Mr. Bright's language sometimes almost persuades us he would have us say,—“Let the strong oppress the weak; let the rich rob the poor—*elsewhere*: it is no concern of ours; we are not the policemen of the world.” The masses among us are happily yet more revolted by such doctrines than the higher ranks. We are not the policemen of the world, it is true; and the political knight-errantry which preaches a crusade against iniquity in general is simply absurd; but every man is a policeman to prevent violence and wrong being committed in his sight and on his path, so far as his capacity extends,—and so is every nation; otherwise the dominion of law is restricted within the narrow limits of private life, and robbery and outrage are banished from the interior of civilised communities, only to have wider range and freer scope and vaster development outside. Is it not obvious that such a policy, if universally adopted,—and if right for us it must be right for all,—would first condemn all weak states to extinction, and then all powerful ones to ceaseless warfare?

The second conclusion at which the nation may be said to have definitively arrived, as among the principles of its foreign policy, is to eschew *intervention* in the internal affairs of other nations—in their civil wars, and in contests between sovereigns and their subjects. We have reached this conclusion in our usual mode,—empirically, not logically or systematically; and it is only after having acted upon it pretty consistently for a considerable period that we have thought of erecting it into a maxim, and laying down argumentatively the grounds which

justify and command its adoption. The admirable lecture of Professor Bernard, and the not less admirable "Few Words" of Mr. J. S. Mill, leave little to be added or desired. The reasons against intervention, which the former especially has so lucidly expounded, may be summed up in two words. Intervention in the internal struggles of foreign countries must be either needless or noxious. If the party whose cause we (outsiders) hold to be the just one be the stronger, it will prevail without our aid; if it be the weaker, and our aid makes it victorious, we probably act unjustly in giving it preponderance at all, and we assuredly act unwisely in giving it a preponderance which, being artificial and unnatural, cannot be maintained without our continuous protection. The "freedom" which foreign intervention has bestowed, or the "order" which foreign intervention has restored (as the case may be), can neither of them be preserved by the state when left to itself: the gift will be ephemeral; and the interposition, therefore, must have been futile.

The practical question, however, for Englishmen is at once felt to be, not "Is non-intervention sound as a general principle?" but, "Are there any exceptions to its application?" Professor Bernard seems inclined to answer most peremptorily in the negative. Mr. Mill, with a surer instinct and a truer sympathy with the decision already half-unconsciously arrived at by the English people, replies in the affirmative. Lord John Russell's blundering despatch of October 27, 1860, perhaps expressed the national feeling on the subject as far as related to the case in hand, but laid down doctrines thoroughly repugnant to the national good-sense. We hold the principle to be irrefragably sound, and we believe the exceptions to its universal application to be, nearly all, *apparent* exceptions only. A very few sentences will explain our views. A people struggling for liberty against their own sovereign can claim no assistance from other free people beyond that encouragement which a consciousness of foreign sympathy must always give; for if they cannot win their freedom from a domestic despot, they are not ripe for it, and could not preserve it. But it is evident that when the sovereign calls in external succour to aid him in putting down his people, the very principle of non-intervention itself warrants and requires free nations to interfere on the people's side, in order to prohibit or to countervail and punish the intervention of the foreign despot. Non-intervention, it is obvious, is a rule of action which must be enforced against the sympathisers on the side of "order," as well as against the sympathisers on the side of "liberty," or it becomes a mere letter of license to the emperors and tyrants of the earth. This needs no argument to prove it; but a corollary which follows from it, and which forms

one of the most indisputable of the apparent "exceptions" above alluded to, may require some more elucidation. Take the case of a despotism established by the systematic and scientific contrivance of a foreign power, sustained by the ceaseless threat and the frequent actuality of external interference; where the monarch, weak himself both in courage, in character, and in resources, is maintained by foreign armies, guarded by foreign troops, a puppet in foreign hands,—paying his guards and his protectors by taxes which those very guards and protectors, and those alone, enable him to wring out of his subjects. Let us suppose that this (virtually) foreign domination has gone on for generations, till the iron has eaten into the hearts of the nation, and cowed and demoralised all but the better spirits of the race; that attempt after attempt for self-liberation has been ruthlessly put down by overwhelming *foreign* force, till nearly all the leaders—all who kept alive the national feeling and were rallying points to the national discontent—were beheaded, exiled, or in prison; and finally, that the whole people, by the same foreign ally of their miserable tyrant, had been effectually disarmed, so that whatever were their will and courage, the very means of emancipation had been taken from them. Let us suppose, in a word, that this unarmed and weakened population, still thirsting after civil and political rights, and capable of making short work of their *native* oppressors, were literally sat upon by a vast and well-appointed army of alien race, encamped either within their boundaries or just beyond them, and yet once more arose to strike a desperate blow for freedom, and called upon some neighbouring and sympathising potentate or people to aid them, to arm them, to give them one chance of fighting for themselves, and to remove the external incubus which paralysed them:—who calls *this* an exception to the doctrine of non-intervention? or who could condemn it if they did call it by so erroneous an appellation? Clearly the intervening nation in such a case would do nothing beyond *undoing the past*, neutralising the previous intervention, rectifying the old injustice, and replacing the real parties to the conflict in their natural, original, simple, uncomplicated, face-to-face position. The case of Italy in 1859 was precisely what we have described; the intervention of France against Austria, and of Victor Emanuel at Naples, were therefore *apparent* exceptions only to the righteous rule, and are to be justified by that rule itself: intervention to prevent intervention, or to countervail it, we have seen to be indisputably warrantable; interventions to neutralise or undo the consequences of recent intervention, to restore the balance and rectify the crime, cannot certainly be less so. To hold any other doctrine would be to proclaim that despots and their foreign abettors are entitled

to profit by their own wrong-doing, provided only it has been vigorous enough. The interventions of 1859 were justified, then, not because the Italians were fighting for their freedom, as Lord John maintained, but because the Austrians had so crushed and cowed and decimated and disarmed them, that without foreign aid *in limine* they could not be in a position to fight for freedom. If Austria had never made herself felt beyond the Po, the act of Louis Napoleon would have been a great crime; it would have been without excuse, and would have been unnecessary. Foreign assistance had always been needed to crush the Italians; foreign assistance had thus become indispensable for their emancipation.

Other cases of apparent exceptions are referred to by Mr. Mill, of much less importance, but of much greater difficulty.

"A case (he says) requiring consideration is that of a protracted civil war, in which the contending parties are so equally balanced that there is no probability of a speedy issue; or, if there is, the victorious side cannot hope to keep down the vanquished but by severities repugnant to humanity and injurious to the permanent welfare of the country. In this exceptional case it seems now to be an admitted doctrine that the neighbouring nations, or one powerful neighbour, with the acquiescence of the rest, are warranted in demanding that the contest shall cease, and a reconciliation take place on equitable terms of compromise. Intervention of this description has been repeatedly practised during the present generation with such general approval, that its legitimacy may be considered to have passed into a maxim of what is called international law. The interference of the European Powers between Greece and Turkey, and between Turkey and Egypt, were cases in point. That between Holland and Belgium was still more so."

The case of Holland and Belgium is one of those exceptions that we have alluded to above as rather apparent than real. Here, again, intervention was only called for to redress consequences arising out of previous interventions. In 1815 the Powers of Europe, for their own objects, had thought fit forcibly to join two states which had no common feelings or interests or character to unite them, and which did not wish for union. They belonged to different races, they spoke different languages, they held different creeds, they followed different pursuits. The Great Powers had no right to link them in an ill-assorted tie; and when they took occasion, in the general excitement of 1832, to insist upon separation, Europe had no alternative but either to insist upon enforcing their old wrong—which the juster temper of the times would not sanction; or letting the combatants fight it out, to the scandal of the world, with no benefit to any one, and with great risk of inaugurating a European war, which it

was every one's concern to avoid, and therefore perhaps every one's right to prevent; or, finally, combining to negotiate and impose an equitable settlement. But if the principle of non-intervention had been always observed, the case for this apparent violation of it would never have arisen.

The case of a protracted civil war or revolution, in which the barbarities practised by one or both parties are such as to outrage and disgrace humanity at large, may probably warrant, and even demand, the interposition of more civilised nations; and possibly that of Greece in 1834 was one of these. The question is by no means a clear one; probably it must always be one of details, of degree, and of dubious decision. The result of intervention in that case, however, has not been specially encouraging. The interposition of the Western Powers between Egypt and Turkey is scarcely a case in point. It was a war between a powerful vassal and his suzerain, which obviously threatened to precipitate the consideration of the vexed "Turkish question," which the potentates of Europe were not at that moment prepared to take in hand; and therefore, and not from motives of humanity, they interfered to compel a compromise. But here, too, the result has by no means justified the wisdom of the interference.

The only remaining case that occurs to us, wherein interference between sovereigns and their subjects is open to discussion, is that of a country like Turkey, where the dominant race is of one religion, and the mass of the population of another,—and that other our own, or one analogous to it. On the one hand it seems difficult to maintain, and all but impossible to practise, the doctrine that we should stand patiently by while Mahometan rulers oppress, outrage, and perhaps massacre their Christian subjects. The instincts of common humanity, as well as those of religious sympathy, forbid such passive spectatorship. On the other hand, it seems equally difficult to argue that we may justly afford to men who are suffering for their religion, or striving for its free exercise, an assistance *ab extra* which we may not render to those who are suffering for their love of liberty, or striving for those civil rights which are as indefeasibly sacred as freedom of conscience and of worship. Nor is it easy to make out any justification for interfering with Mahometan rulers on behalf of Christian subjects which shall not apply with nearly equal aptness to interference with Catholic rulers on behalf of Protestant subjects, or *vice versa*,—an interference which, if carried beyond the limits of remonstrance and representation, would not be tolerated among powerful and mutually respecting European states, and which, even if confined within these limits, is now usually resented as an unwarrantable liberty. Nor, again, can

those who advocate such intervention steer clear of the obvious practical embarrassment which occurs in nearly every instance, arising from the inseparable intermixture of religious pretensions with political hostility, and the habit of the one to assume the cloak and the claimed immunities of the other. The heretical subjects of any government are as a rule its political malcontents, if not its would-be rebels also; and the government may be really only putting down insurgents and seditious citizens, when to foreign co-religionists it appears to be coercing true believers. Our own experience in Ireland should enlighten us somewhat on this head, and makes us hesitate before coming to any rash or dogmatic conclusion. The case of the Christians under the Ottoman dominion is still further complicated by the notorious fact that their wrongs are used, and their turbulence possibly stimulated, by both France and Russia, with a view to ulterior political designs; so that any sanction by England of the principle of interference in such circumstances is peculiarly questionable. Our late intervention in Syria was one of very problematic equity and prudence: the matter was very difficult, and we should scruple to pronounce a positive opinion on either side. Perhaps in the case of Turkey, as in others we have had occasion to discuss, the question would never have come before us had we religiously abstained from previous interpositions. In that case the Ottoman power might have no longer existed to be a puzzle, an opprobrium, and a peril to European statesmanship.

On the whole, we do not feel prepared to lay down any positive dictum on this branch of the question, or to pronounce that no case or degree of religious persecution can warrant armed foreign intervention. But assuredly the case must be marvellously strong and marvellously clear, and each instance must stand upon its own merits. What Burke said in reference to revolutions will apply here. "Times, and occasions, and provocations, will teach their own lessons. The wise will determine from the gravity of the case; the irritable from sensibility to oppression; the high-minded from disdain and indignation at abusive power in unworthy hands; the bold and the brave from the love of honourable danger in a generous cause;—but, with or without *right*, intervention will always be the very last resource of the thinking and the good."

Our course being so far cleared through the conclusive adoption, by the national mind, of the two doctrines we have been considering as the fundamental principles of its foreign policy, all that remains is to discern and set before us some one distinct aim and object, the pursuit of which, in conformity to the above principles, shall guide our international action, and to the attain-

ment of which our every external proceeding shall be persistently and intelligently directed. It seems to us that it is not difficult to discover this inspiring, guiding, and sustaining aim—nay more, that it is difficult to miss it. We think, moreover, it is one which, when once clearly grasped and steadily kept in view, will meet all our requirements, and will satisfy and embody the wishes of all the various parties in the state. It will be most conducive to our safety and our strength, which *all* desire; to our ultimate inaction, which the selfish “isolation” school desire; to the development of constitutional freedom throughout Europe, which the “sympathising” school desire. It is just in itself and in its means, and its end and issue will be peace. Our aim in our international action, then (to speak somewhat abstractedly), should be to bring about such a state of affairs in Europe as shall render action unnecessary; or (to express it somewhat more definitely, though perhaps a little pedantically) *to produce a state of stable equilibrium.*

No thoughtful man, unblinded by diplomatic subtleties and traditions, can look abroad upon Europe without seeing, first, that it is in a condition of most *unstable* equilibrium; and secondly, that it is vigorously endeavouring to right itself. There is perhaps scarcely a single country except our own which is not, so to speak, in a *provisional* or transition state, both in reference to its internal concerns and to its foreign relations. This is peculiarly true of those greater countries which, if they do not constitute the whole political world, at least determine its condition: France, Italy, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey. In 1815 the statesmen of Europe endeavoured to settle Europe for good; but in the process they disregarded natural rights and natural affinities, the principles of justice and the instincts of humanity, and therefore they failed; and the history of Europe ever since has been one ceaseless protest and insurgence against that settlement, and endeavour to upset it,—a protest and endeavour, sometimes active, sometimes latent, sometimes explosive, sometimes subterranean, sometimes local, sometimes general, but always existing and observable. The obstacles to the stable equilibrium which we crave—the elements of the unstable equilibrium which we deplore and suffer from—may be classed under two heads:

1. Internal Tyranny.
2. Artificial Unions.

To promote the overthrow of these prolific causes of suffering and war, and to promote that overthrow with strict adherence to our two fundamental rules of non-isolation and non-inter-vention, must be the guiding aim and object of the foreign

policy of England. Let us develop this idea a little more in detail.

No one can fail to perceive that the motive-cause of nearly every political movement which has taken place in Europe for the last forty-five years has been the desire of peoples to assert their freedom of action and of will, to claim their natural rights, and to group themselves according to their natural affinities. This inspiration has pierced through every uprising and disturbance, whether isolated or extensive. It manifested itself unmistakably in 1821, 1831, 1848, and 1860. In Portugal and Spain, in Prussia, in Piedmont, in France, and in nearly all Germany, in 1848, the insurrections and revolutions were for freer institutions and wider civil and political privileges, and the success, though varying, was signal in nearly every instance. France and Central and Southern Germany alone lost what they had won—France because she did not understand or value it, Germany because she could not maintain it. But every country gave evidence to the force and vitality of the desire. Not less obvious, and scarcely less universal, has been the tendency to dissolve all those unnatural unions which had been devised and enforced in 1815,—whether unnatural *ab ovo*, or having become so by lapse of time and change of circumstances,—and to replace them by more congruous and spontaneous combinations. Greece gave us the first example, and effected her disruption from an alien tie in 1829. Holland and Belgium secured their divorce in 1832. The whole history of Venice and Lombardy has been a struggle to burst the iron chain which bound them to the Austrian yoke. The efforts of the several German states to bind themselves into that closer federation which seems commanded by natural affinity, showed in 1849 how strong was the prevailing tendency of the age; and the “Schleswig-Holstein question” is a still more signal, because a much less rational, exemplification of the same tendency, almost amounting to a passion. The resolute determination of Hungary not to suffer her nationality to be absorbed into that of Austria, is another example of this repulsion for forced and unnatural unions; while the zeal with which she clings to her laws and her Diet equally show the other predominant spirit of the age, the love of constitutional freedom. The Slavonic and Danubian provinces are also largely stirred and influenced by the sentiment of natural affinity, so much quoted of late under the name of “nationality,” though we know much less than elsewhere of its real working. And finally, America has given us a most remarkable illustration, on a great scale, though in a somewhat anomalous form, of the disposition to exchange the *artificial* for the *natural* in the formation of political combinations.

The great guiding truth, then, which we seek seems to be written in sunbeams both on the annals of the last generation and on the living history that is now unrolling before our eyes; viz. that the "stable equilibrium," which is indispensable to the peace and progress of the world, can only be found by permitting and encouraging the development of these two prevailing and irrepressible tendencies of the age,—the tendency of peoples to demand free institutions, and to group themselves according to their natural affinities; in other words, the principle of *self-government*, and the principle of *nationality*. These tendencies once developed to their full issues,—the artificial and illegitimate obstacles now placed in their way by extraneous and therefore unwarrantable interferences once forbidden and removed,—the world has a clear path, and England a smooth future, before them. The healthy and natural development of these tendencies will give us *peace*; for all the wars and convulsions which have disturbed Europe since the downfall of Napoleon are indisputably traceable, directly or indirectly, to the struggle between these irrepressible instincts and the shackles with which terror or ambition has pertinaciously endeavoured to chain them down. When nations are united to their natural kindred and their chosen friends, and when citizens every where have obtained those political and civil privileges which can nowhere be *permanently* withheld from any who truly desire them and are fit for them, then,—we do not say, for we do not hope, that wars will altogether cease,—but assuredly the most prolific and the most incurable source of sanguinary conflicts will be removed; for the just claims and the indestructible aspirations of all peoples will have been satisfied, and no quarrels but such as admit of arbitration can thenceforth arise. You may mediate between two claimants to one territory, or two nations which have been irritated by mutual affronts; you cannot mediate between a nation determined to be free and a despot bent upon retaining it in thralldom.

The healthy and fair development of these two tendencies, moreover, will bring us *safety*. With the multiplication of constitutional states, and the gradual elimination of despotic governments, our friends must increase and our enemies diminish; for autocrats must always dislike us and mistrust us; and free nations, even if there be some rivalry between us, *must* always have an overriding sympathy with a land like ours, which is the very bulwark and embodiment of freedom. Till despotism is at an end every where, free states will be our natural allies in all contests in which liberty is in any degree at stake; and even when all states are self-governing, we, who are never aggressive in our policy, and desire only justice to all (as far as we

discern it) and the integrity of our own possessions, shall always have the grand and generally adequate security against wrong and encroachment which publicity and fair discussion invariably offer to the right cause and the honest disputant. We are not, indeed, very devout believers in the inherent wisdom and virtue of democracies; we are by no means sure that they are not as easily blinded by their prejudices and infuriated by their passions as any autocrat or any oligarchy; but wherever there is open discussion, a free press, and a free assembly, the voice of sense and justice will at least make itself heard, and sooner or later will prevail; and if publicity do not secure us from irrational and undeserved enmity, it will at least give us warning of its approaching blow.

The gradual progress and the final victory of self-government and nationality will, in the last place, bring us to that blessed condition of possible international *inaction* which is the longed-for paradise of Mr. Bright. When the citizens of every nation have gained the freedom which they want, and are joined to the brethren whom they love, what, except internal prosperity, will they have to strive for? There will be nothing left for them to ask, or for us to do. There will be no work for our Foreign Minister to do beyond a sort of consular vigilance over the rights and safety of our fellow-countrymen abroad. There will be little for any state to dread, except piratical assaults of the strong upon the weak, for which there would be small temptation, because small prospect of success. For, nations blessed with self-government, and harmonious and homogeneous because constituted according to natural affinities of sentiment and race, would seldom be weak enough to allure the most unscrupulous and daring spoiler, and in the hour of danger would find ample auxiliaries to prevent or punish the aggression. Of all things, the most suggestive and provocative of wars in modern times is, the knowledge that large classes of the adversary's subjects are discontented because oppressed or unenfranchised, or belonging to conquered and therefore irreconcilably hostile tribes. If the people of Austria were free and contented, and if she kept by force no alien and irritated populations within her grasp, what empire, however warlike or mighty, would deem her a safe object for aggression? Once more, we repeat it,—the sole dangers and disturbances of European tranquillity arise from the unnatural and artificial condition in which it is, and in which so many are vainly endeavouring to maintain it. A *forced* state of things is of necessity a precarious, a turbulent, an *unpermanent* state,—a state, essentially and incurably, of *unstable equilibrium*.

Now, the thesis which we desire to propound, and which needs little illustration and scarcely any argument to maintain it,

is, that this state of stable equilibrium in Europe, from which so many cherished blessings would ensue, is to be sought, and can assuredly be attained, by the steady, sagacious, and *thorough* practical application to our foreign policy of the two combined principles we have specified, as those at which the good sense and good feeling of the nation had already arrived. If we will only systematically and courageously carry out *in its entirety* the principle of non-intervention, the desired work will go on as fast as it ought, and in the direction it is best that it should follow. If nations are left to themselves, they will group themselves according to their natural affinities; and they will win free institutions and self-government, if they really desire these blessings, and as soon as, and in proportion as, they are fit for them. Our interposition to help them would only have the effect, either of enabling them to go too fast, or of diverting them somewhat from their natural bent, or of confusing the clearness of their native instincts. We should probably make mistakes as to their national affinities which, left to themselves, they would not make, and should thus hamper or mar their natural and proper action; and we should assuredly endeavour to mould their institutions after our own model, and thus give them a garment which was not made for them and would not fit them. Probably, too, we should enable them to gain what, not being *up to*, they could not preserve; and failure, reaction, and disappointment would ensue.

But the principle of non-intervention, in its completeness,—and if not completed it is fallacious, mischievous, and not a principle at all,—requires and means that *nations shall be left to themselves*; it does not mean that England shall not interfere, but that *no nation* shall interfere; it does not mean only that we shall not interfere to aid liberty and nationality, it means that no one else shall interfere to thwart them. It is a two-edged sword, beneficent and just only when both edges are used. The course of our foreign policy, therefore, is clear (that is, the aim which it should pertinaciously pursue; the means, and the modifications, and the flexibilities called for in each several emergency and complication must be left to the sagacity of each individual minister who holds the seals of office at the time): to proclaim for ourselves, and to urge and enforce upon other powers, the duty of leaving every state and nation to itself, to fight its own internal battles, to settle its own domestic controversies, to arrange its own constitutional concerns. We have to get this doctrine acknowledged as a maxim of European law; never to interfere ourselves, except to prevent or to countervail interference by others; to “pair off” with some opponents, to warn off others; as far as we can, and by the most earnest

means at our disposal, to the last extreme that we feel it prudent to venture,—always by remonstrance,—occasionally, if need be, by menace,—and, in worthy crises, even by armed force,—to secure to every people a fair and undisturbed field for their struggle against native despotism or hated and forced amalgamations. Much has already been done in this direction. Ultimate success in it we regard as certain, if only Great Britain will heartily and persistently adopt the principle as her banner, and never lose sight of it or be false to it for a moment; if only we have no more foreign secretaries capable of astounding the world by preaching and enforcing the doctrine for a couple of years as if it were his gospel, and then, on the first occasion when adherence to it became inconvenient, turning round and denouncing it in the broadest terms in such a despatch as that of October 27th, 1860.

We do not mean to say that difficulties may not arise as to the application of this principle. One of the most perplexing of these presents itself at the very moment we are writing. The Emperor of Austria is at issue with two sections of his subjects,—with nearly two millions in Venetia, and with probably ten millions or more in Hungary, Transylvania, and Croatia. The Venetians are only kept from open rebellion by an overwhelming armed force. The Hungarians have adopted a plan of systematic and universal passive resistance, waiting for an opportunity of taking more active measures to enforce their claims or to assert their independence. The Emperor is strong enough to coerce both sections singly into quiet if not into submission, and perhaps strong enough to overpower even a joint insurrection. If an outbreak should occur,—and sooner or later it is certain to occur,—are the insurgents (the justice of whose cause few, at least in England, will question) to be denied any assistance from without? Is France to be allowed to aid and encourage Hungary? Is the new kingdom of Italy to be suffered to join its forces to those of its Venetian brethren who are clamouring for its succour, and are bent upon being amalgamated with it? Or does our principle of non-intervention call upon us to forbid both interpositions?

The case is a very complicated one, and the righteous answer is by no means obvious nor unassailable. If we could look at the question merely in its present phase, and without reference to the recent past, we should be obliged to decide against any assistance from without being rendered to either section of insurgents. No doubt the imperial attempt to extinguish the Hungarian Constitution is a gross and perfidious wrong; but it is not for a foreign nation to constitute itself either judge or partisan. The Hungarians are many millions, and must make

good their own claims. If they cannot do so, they are the weaker party, and, as we have shown before, foreign aid to enable the weaker party to prevail involves the continuance of foreign protection, and therefore implies an artificial and forced arrangement,—a state of unstable equilibrium. The Venetians at first sight have a stronger claim upon our sympathies. They are a conquered race: they have been more cruelly maltreated; they are weaker; they are fewer; they belong by affection and by race to another nation, from the embrace of which they are forcibly withheld, and which is longing with all the passionate love of kindred to annex them. Yet, *looking only to the bare facts of the present*, it appears to us impossible to allow, without flagrantly deserting the doctrines we have laid down, to defend the right of the Italian monarch to render armed assistance to the Venetians, though without it it is certain they will never be able to achieve their liberation. The conclusion is most unwelcome, but to all appearance unavoidable to honest reasoners.

But when we refer to the *antecedents* of the two cases,—and to antecedents by no means remote,—they assume a very different aspect. *Why* do the Hungarians now need extraneous aid to maintain their ancient privileges and their long-discarded constitution? Because they were crushed by foreign intervention in 1849. In that year they had made good their ground; they had baffled and defeated the Austrian monarch, and the game was in their own hands. But Russia was called in to overpower them; and Russia did for Austria what Austria could not do for herself. There is therefore a wrong to be redressed; a violation of the principle of non-intervention to be neutralised, countervailed, and undone. If Russia had not so iniquitously interposed—and been so pusillanimously and imprudently suffered to interpose—in 1849, neither French nor Italian interposition would be needed in 1861. The Hungarians would have been their own masters, either independent of Austria or united to her on equitable terms and with impregnable securities, and the problem which perplexes us would not even exist. Austria, having profited by the violation of law twelve years ago, cannot justly claim the protection of that law to secure those ill-won profits now.

The antecedents to be pleaded in favour of Venice are unfortunately less recent and less clear; still they have great weight. She has never been Austrian by consent or by amalgamation. She was *stolen* rather than conquered by the arms of republican France, and was shamefully handed over to Austria by Napoleon in 1796; she was subsequently absorbed into the French Empire, and finally given back to Austria at the Congress of 1815, in

defiance of decency and justice, by the assembled sovereigns who so ruthlessly trampled upon both. It was Europe who wrongfully and cruelly consigned her to a yoke she abhorred, and against which she earnestly protested, and has never ceased to protest: it is for Europe to undo that wrong. As far as morality and equity are concerned, the case seems clear and cogent enough. But the difficulty lies in the comparative antiquity of the injustice done; for it is obvious that if we allow *any* antecedent foreign intervention to justify intervention on the other side now, there is an end of our principle altogether as a practical guide. In international, as in municipal law, there must be a statute of limitations,—some date beyond which titles, however scandalous or full of flaws, are not to be disturbed. It may, no doubt, be argued on behalf of Venice, that it was only the interference of Russia to save and aid Austria in 1849 that enabled that power to defeat Piedmont, and so to recover Lombardy and Venice; and that this interference has, therefore, yet to be atoned for and countervailed in Italy as well as in Hungary. And the argument is, if not perfectly irrefragable, at least so weighty that an English diplomatist, inclined to defend Victor Emanuel for what—defensible or indefensible—is certain to be done, would do well to rest his justification on this ground. It is lamentable to reflect that if England, in conjunction with France, whose coöperation might then have been attained, had only had a clear enough view of what policy and justice alike dictated to forbid the interference of Russia in the Hungarian revolution, all these perplexing problems might have been avoided, and two sanguinary wars, with their terrible fields of Sebastopol and Solferino, might have been spared to Europe, as well as ten years deemed out of the struggling and suffering lifetime of the world.

The ill-assorted and convulsed empire of Austria is not the only obstacle to the attainment of that state of stable equilibrium which Europe craves, and which is the price and condition of her tranquillity. Turkey is a problem equally menacing and less easy of solution. From that instability of which Austria is the centre and the cause, there are two practicable issues, attainable to-morrow if it should so please Francis Joseph and his advisers. She may, by the surrender of Venetia on equitable terms, relieve herself of a dependency which has long been to her a source of material weakness, of moral obloquy, and of military danger; she may liberate 200,000 of her best troops for defensive action in other quarters; she may convert a cause of expense into a cause of revenue; she may secure at once the cordial friendship of the English nation as well as of the English government, and ultimately, when the soreness consequent upon long irritation shall have died out, the frank alliance of Italy itself. At the

same time, by honestly and sincerely abandoning the struggle with Hungary, accepting the ancient constitution of that country and leaving its amendment in the hands of the people themselves, she may once more reconcile them to her sceptre, and unite them to the amalgamated portion of her empire. They will be sturdy, free-spoken, and somewhat troublesome subjects; but, on the other hand, they will again become, as they have been heretofore, incomparably the most reliable portion of her military strength, to say nothing of material resources. Thus relieved and thus fortified, Austria, for all avowable and valuable purposes, would be more powerful than ever.—Or there is another solution, less easy and demanding more time for its accomplishment. Austria, unable either to reconcile Hungary or to conquer it, might allow the Magyars, as well as the Venetians, to separate and form more natural connexions further east, and might concentrate her efforts upon becoming the nucleus and the head of a really powerful and united German empire, a combination that, if once fairly and soundly carried into effect, would create a central European state irresistible for conservative ends. A united Austria or a united Germany would, either of them, supply that element in the balance of power which our statesmen desiderate so much.

But the future of Turkey is far more perplexing; and any arrangement of it, consistent at once with safety, permanence, and the clear principles of political morality, does not, we confess, present itself to our minds. The Ottoman race is scanty in proportion to the number of its subjects, and, in Europe especially, is still dwindling away. In spite of some excellent qualities, it is inherently, and by virtue of its religion also, an unprogressive race. It reigns not over one conquered people, but over several, some of which are superior to itself in energy, in skill, in capacity for improvement—in fact, in all the qualifications for advanced civilisation. It is surrounded by covetous enemies, and it has at least one powerful, intractable, and semi-independent vassal; its hold over many of its provinces is feeble, and its government in all parts is corrupt and weak in the extreme. It has already lost one considerable portion of its dominions, and has often been in imminent peril of losing more. For a long period the Ottoman Empire has owed its continued existence (as a European Power, at all events), not to its own means of resisting either external or internal foes, but to the mutual jealousy of England, Russia, France, and Austria, who keep the decrepit state alive because they cannot agree what to do upon its death. It is obvious, therefore, that Turkey presents one of those instances spoken of above, of artificial and unnatural political arrangements, which can only be upheld by

force, and therefore ought not, *primâ facie*, to be upheld at all. Left to herself, dissolution in some form, by internal confusion or by foreign conquest, must be her speedy fate. What, then, should be done? If we stand aside altogether and let matters take their course, Russia would seize the best portion of the European territory, and France the best portion of the Asiatic, and England would only be withheld by moral considerations from claiming her share of the spoil. If we adhere to the strict principle of non-intervention ourselves and enforce it upon others, the almost certain issue would be an independent and a weak Egypt, Syria convulsed and perhaps deluged in blood, and the Roumelian and Albanian provinces rendered a scene of confusion and anarchy which would seriously endanger the tranquillity of the adjacent countries. This state of things assuredly would not, and perhaps ought not, to be long endured by the more settled Powers of Europe; yet to interfere authoritatively and effectually would almost be to take the government of Turkey into their own hands; and if they are to govern it they might as well possess it. On the whole, the only conclusion which is clear to our minds is, that our former errors in this matter have entailed upon us a plentiful harvest of coming difficulties, much peril, and perhaps even some inevitable wrong.

The tendency of the age is, then, as we have shown, towards the production of a state of stable equilibrium; and as this tendency is just and wholesome, we hold it to be ultimately irresistible. Those who comprehend it and aid it will, on its rising wave, ride into influence and empire. Those who ignore it and fight against it will be baffled, and may be crushed. Now, to seize the living conception of the age—to speak its thought, to understand its need, to help it to express itself, and act itself out, as it were—is the true work of a practical statesman. To do this, whether in literature or in politics, is to become popular and powerful. We are disposed to believe that Louis Napoleon has grasped this conception: we are quite sure that our ministers have not. The Emperor of the French has the establishment of his dynasty more at heart than any other object. He sees that, though he himself may be able to maintain his position, his son could not retain the sceptre for a year, unless Europe were settled and at rest. That settlement and rest he seeks in that condition of stable equilibrium in which alone it can be found. He wishes to leave behind him no open questions to distract and endanger his successor. He labours, therefore—fitfully, irregularly, and tortuously, no doubt—to restore the violated affinities, and liberate the compressed democracies of Europe; to break the galling fetters that cannot always be

endured; to set free the upheaving aspirations that *must* have vent. He thinks that it is only the crushing of the popular will that makes it dangerous—that it is only the outrages inflicted on the sentiment of nationality that makes it insurgent. He saw that France *would* have glory and democracy: he gave her the one, and wields the other. He saw that Italy *would* have unity and freedom: and he interfered to help her, and has done so even more effectually than he designed. He sees that Hungary *will* have administrative independence, and we expect that, when the time comes, he will aid her cause; believing that when Hungary is reconciled and Venetia sold or lost, Austria will be, not crushed, but tranquil. What further conclusions he may draw from the conception which he has grasped, we will not attempt to predict.

ART. II.—MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LITERATURE:
PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

The Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman. Edited from a contemporary Manuscript, with an Historical Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary, by Thomas Wright, M.A., F.S.A., &c. In two volumes. Second and revised edition. Russell Smith.

THE revival of modern taste for olden literature (if the taste ever really ceased) is a curious subject, and worthy of more attention than it has yet received, or can now be given to it here. It is a general opinion in this country, that the appearance of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, in 1765, first directed the public mind to our old writers. But it may be doubted whether this conclusion does not confound cause with effect, attributing a change in the national taste to the influence of a single volume, whereas the change had probably been growing for some years. What Percy unquestionably did, was to eschew the solemn tediousness and minute trifling of the mere archæologists, and to bring an elegant literature and an agreeable criticism to the illustration of antiquarian subjects, thus appealing to a larger number of readers. But he was too immediately followed by labourers of a similar class to justify the ascription of the entire results to his example. In 1774, Warton produced the first volume of his *History of English Poetry*. In the following year, Tyrwhitt

began the publication of his learned and elaborate edition of Chaucer. Ritson, though he died in 1803, was young enough to have been influenced by the publication of the *Reliques*, had he not been "an original" in every sense of the word. He can scarcely be called elegant or agreeable either as a writer or a man; but his industry, acuteness, and causticity almost forced attention to a subject of which he treated. These, however, are only leading names. From before the publication of Percy up to the close of the last century, various collections, or historical sketches, of our old poetry appeared, indicative of the current of the public mind. Dodsley and Hawkins sent forth *Old Plays*; the Maitland Collection of Ancient Scottish Poems, and Pinkerton's Scottish Poems, reprinted from scarce editions, appeared; Alexander Campbell produced his *Introduction to the History of Scottish Poetry from the Thirteenth Century*, and George Ellis his *Specimens of the Early English Poets*. These, and others of a like kind, might seldom possess the elegance of Percy, though they were often more accurate. But while they aided in promoting an archæological taste, they also proved its direction. For though enthusiasts may publish books at a loss, or even a publisher may now and then commit such a mistake, a *class* of works for which there is no demand will soon cease to be brought out.

But the taste for olden literature did not terminate in the republication of old books. So strong an interest was excited towards our literary antiquities, that a Record Commission was appointed about the close of the last century. This body lasted nearly forty years, under various formal reconstitutions; doing little compared with its means and opportunities, and grossly neglecting its duties in many things. At last public opinion, gradually roused by the pertinacious attacks of the late Sir Harris Nicolas and others in exposing the insufficiency and jobbery of these Commissions, caused the dissolution of the Sixth Commission. This was soon after followed by the inauguration of the new system under the auspices of the late Lord Langdale, continued by the present Sir John Romilly. The change was a very great improvement. A stop was put to the careless or wanton destruction of the Records; steps were taken to collect them into one national depository, under one uniform control, instead of allowing them to be scattered through the country, often in careless or indifferent custody. Our public muniments have now been classified and reduced to order, and made readily accessible to the inquirer,—a most important point. The publication department is perhaps not altogether so great an improvement upon the old commissions as its friends believe, except in greater activity and regularity.

For if the old commissioners were occasionally injudicious in the choice of muniments for publication, and cumbrous in the form of their volumes, their successors have now and then been slight in matter and merit. However, the broad improvements over the old system are vast, though somewhat of the old leaven, or of the exclusiveness of the bibliomania, still lurks about them. For instance, so little of a business spirit is found, that it is difficult to ascertain what works they have published.

While these proceedings were going on as regards the public records, the literary world beyond the official archæologists and archivists was steadily diffusing the taste for olden literature. Bibliomania, which rose to such an absurd and costly height during the first dozen or twenty years of the present century, at least made attention to old books a fashion. One of its results—the prices of the Roxburghe sale, where a book, whose only distinction was its bibliographical rarity, sold for 2,260*l.*—originated the various Clubs and Printing Societies, —as the Roxburghe, the Bannatyne, the Abbotsford, the Camden, and the like,—for republishing scarce books, and printing manuscripts. And though some of these societies may have been tainted with bibliomaniacal exclusiveness, or occasionally have printed trivial things, while they might undoubtedly have shown more liberality in allowing the sale of particular publications, yet they have preserved curious or valuable documents that otherwise might have perished, and rendered many things accessible, if somewhat difficult to reach.

During this time, too, individual authors were labouring, perhaps still more effectually, in calling attention to the wits, wisdom, or maybe dulness of our ancestors. Among those who may be termed the last generation, if they did not really belong to the last century, George Ellis, Leyden, Weber—all friends of Walter Scott—may be mentioned. But Scott himself stands preëminent over all, not excepting Percy, for stimulating the public attention to the past. And perhaps he did this more by his novels and poems than by his direct antiquarian labours, though these were not inconsiderable. Of able, and, what is more, of sensible, antiquarians belonging rather to the present than the past generation, and who value antiquities more for their use than their age, the late Sir Harris Nicolas, the late Sir Francis Palgrave, Singer, Wright, Halliwell, Hunter, are the most popularly known; but there are others of equal powers, if employed on more recondite subjects. Nor has “the trade” been indifferent to the subject: publishers have produced works in which their legitimate objects of profit must have been subordinate to their feeling for literary antiquities.

These facts would seem to prove that the taste for medieval literature has extended widely and penetrated deeply. But we doubt this apparently reasonable conclusion. In addition to professed antiquarians, there has always been a small public in this country—chiefly found among the leisurely and professional classes—with a strong turn for inquiring into the arts and manners, and realising the life, of the past. That this class has largely increased of late, and that it pursues its studies on a better system, and may turn them to a better account than formerly, we believe to be true. Except in the cheap reprints of old authors, this would of itself account for the publication of a class of books, the extent of whose impression is always limited. But the number of persons who buy books without any intention of reading them is much greater now than formerly. The practice of making books a species of furniture has descended from magnates to millionaires. The mansions of great manufacturers in the northern counties, or of lucky speculators at the West End of London, are now furnished with splendid libraries, many books in which the owners could not read, and many whose subjects they could not enter into, however disposed they might be. The books are like the pictures, statues, and articles of *vertu*, which are found in their company, and stand in the owner's real estimation no higher than the furniture, if so high. Like Pope's pretender to taste,

“Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats ;
Artists must choose his pictures, music, meats.
He buys for Topham drawings and designs ;
For Pembroke statues, dirty gods, and coins ;
Rare monkish manuscripts for Hearne alone,
And books for Mead, and butterflies for Sloane.”

Undoubtedly these remarks do not apply to many purchasers, especially of the cheaper editions ; and there are probably conscientious students of the Father of English poetry among those who cannot afford to buy any book which they do not intend to read. But we suspect that many purchase the *Canterbury Tales* without exactly knowing the impediments they will meet with, and that the real readers, or more properly students, of that great storehouse of medieval characters, manners, and opinions, are few.

Persons who agree with this opinion will ascribe the cause to Chaucer's language, for this is “every one's thought.” Upwards of a century and a half ago Dryden reproduced several of Chaucer's tales, giving as a reason that his “language is so obsolete, that his sense is scarcely to be understood.” Not many years after, Pope, in like manner, modernised two of the tales, and made the *House of Fame* a basis for his own *Temple*. The

reason he assigned was similar to Dryden's. Pope, indeed, in the Essay on Criticism, appears to consider the existence of modern authors threatened, through the alleged instability of modern languages :

"No longer now that golden age appears,
When patriarch wits survived a thousand years :
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast ;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be."

This we all see is hyperbole; yet some such notion is vaguely held to the present day. But the difficulty of the mere language is exaggerated. There are doubtless many obsolete words that must be "looked out," while many are used in a different sense to that which now obtains, and the true sense must be inferred. Such words, however, are seldom met with in *clusters*, so as to obscure the broad meaning of a passage, and would little impede a reader's first perusal were not other causes at work. The difficulty of the medieval writers is as much with their diction as their language, if by language we mean words, and by diction the order or mode of their combination. Many of the Anglo-Saxon inflexions were discontinued in the fourteenth century, and those which were retained seldom offer any difficulty as to meaning; but the ellipsis and inversion which inflected languages admit were still in use. Hence sentences, whose words are plain English, require attention to apprehend, on account of the collocation of words, or their omission, when modern practice requires their insertion. Then there are forms of speech or peculiarities of style which are rather strange than obscure. The style moreover, like the age itself, was primitive, almost childlike. In short, a "general reader," when first introduced to a medieval writer, is much in the condition of a pure cockney forced into conversation with a pure countryman. If the words were presented singly, he would understand most of them; but the arrangement, the subject-matter, the mode of thought and of speech, are so alien to the Londoner's previous experience, that he cannot "make the fellow out," except by what may be called a *critical attention*, which he has not been trained to give.

The obstacles connected with language must of course be conquered by the student himself. Almost as great an impediment is created by the spelling as by the language, and perhaps gratuitously. No doubt an archaic character is given to the poet's page by the old orthography; and reasons may be alleged for retaining the spelling of the manuscripts. An obsolete word may as well be spelled one way as another; to change the

Anglo-Saxon forms might affect the grammar as well as the delicacy of the writer's meaning; to leave old words and old grammatical forms, and modernise the rest, might appear incongruous. All this may be true; but it does not alter the fact that the spelling is nearly as great an obstacle as the language. Moreover, it may be observed that no settled rules of orthography are observed by the writers or the copyists, differences being found even in juxtaposition. In the *Creed of Piers Ploughman*, the word "little" stands in one line as we now spell it, in the next it is "lytel." Chaucer in one place spells mine host of the Tabard "oste;" a few lines further on he uses the modern orthography "host;" it is also found as "hoste," at other times as "ost." The orthographical variations running through the entire works of a writer are still more numerous. Chaucer spells the word "much" in *seven* different ways, says Mr. Bell; while "the past tense of the verb 'to see' is rendered into at least *ten* different forms." So much, indeed, is the trouble of perusal enhanced to a beginner by the accident of spelling, that we believe a skilful reader could make Chaucer perfectly intelligible to a mixed audience, by merely changing the obsolete words (or giving their meaning in a sort of *vocal* parenthesis). Every one would recognise the words when *heard*, though they would be a puzzle if *seen*. Neither would such a reader have to pronounce so many halting lines as is commonly asserted, if, instead of trying to count syllables on his fingers, he accommodated his voice to the poet's language, moving as it ever does with his conceptions. This last opinion can of course only be tested by the living voice. A short example will indicate the obstacles which spelling interposes. The lines are from the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*:

"Impe on an ellere,
And if thyn appul be swete,
Muchel merveille me thynketh;
And moore of a sherewe
That bryngeth forth any barn,
But if he be the same,
And have a savour after the sire;
Selde sestow oother."

In all this only one word is obsolete ("ellere"), though "impe" is obsolete in the sense of "to graft." Modernise the spelling, and the meaning is clear of the rest, though the use of "but if" may be odd:

"Impe (graft) on an ellere (elder-tree),
And if thine apple be sweet,
Much marvel me thinketh;
And more of a shrew
That bringeth forth any bairn,
But if (unless) he be the same,

And have a savour after the sire ;
Seldom see'st thou other."

ll. 5471-5478.

In fact the spelling produces the same effect as a bad handwriting ; we do not *read* it—we have to *decipher* it.

But steady application will soon conquer difficulties arising from mere language, though only practice will give the familiarity with old modes of thought and diction which is requisite to produce facility of perusal and thoroughness of apprehension. The real obstacles to the popularity of even the greatest medieval writers lie deeper than language, often extending to the form and substance. A student looks for dryness in technical or scientific books. But he makes up his mind to persevere, finding his reward, not only in the acquisition of knowledge, but in the growing interest he feels in the subject as his knowledge increases. A work of imagination is expected to supply that interest of itself by exciting our sympathies ; if it does not, the reader is disappointed. But the greatest genius must have something congenial to appeal to in the mind he addresses ; and that something we believe is essentially *knowledge*, with its associations. What is the interest of a "general reader" in a book on mathematics, or on any other scientific or professional subject, compared with the interest of a practitioner or professor ? The apathy with which the public mind regards Indian topics and Hindoo literature is mainly owing to ignorance, for the Hindoo mythology is not more absurd than the Scandinavian or Egyptian : Hindoo men and women display the passions and feelings of a common humanity, though coloured and modified by Oriental habits : the worldly and moral maxims of their works often exhibit the conclusions of a just observation : but the English public knows little or nothing of India, and will not be at the trouble of learning, so that to readers in general the Hindoos are an abomination. An indifference, though much less in degree, is exhibited even towards English writers of a past age, and the indifference is greater the more the age differs from our own in manners and opinions, habits of thinking, and of expressing its thoughts. Except Shakespeare, the great Elizabethan dramatists cannot be called *popular*. Their successors of the Restoration, and the play-writers to the close of the last century, are pretty much in the same predicament. So, perhaps, are the poets, with the exception of Milton, Pope, and Goldsmith. We still talk of Addison and Steele ; but few, we fancy, read them, save students of history or manners. The collected essays of the last century, called the British classics, are quite gone out. Except his dictionary, the world reads Johnson in Boswell ; for the gloomy philosophy of *Rasselas*, or the weight of thought

and strength of expression in his poetry, are only perused by the few, though many may quote his lines without knowing the author. When writers removed from us by only two centuries and a half at the most, and the latest of whom were contemporaries of our grandfathers, have thus fallen out of mind, we can scarcely wonder that those who flourished nearly five hundred years ago should not have much attraction for persons who read without a regular object, or indeed without any object except to amuse themselves at the least expense of mental exertion.

Moreover, there are reasons, or at least excuses, for the popular reader. The medieval writers, as Dryden speaking of Chaucer expresses it, "lived in the infancy of our poetry, and nothing is brought to perfection at once." Although we think the halting character of medieval verse is exaggerated, there are undoubtedly many prosaic lines to be found, and many that will not scan, though they may not be lame if judiciously read. In short, the writers of the middle ages had made little advances in literary mechanics, and though mere mechanical finish cannot long furnish a substitute for weight of thought or felicity of expression, it will support attention for a while, or at least not fatigue it. The medieval writers, if not strictly prolix, are sometimes minute to tediousness. The form of their works is frequently that of allegory or vision, or both in combination. Their story and narrative is consequently often artificial or lifeless, sometimes confused. The critic has prepared himself to expect this, and the faults themselves furnish him with noteworthy matter. But the popular reader, scarcely acquainted with any literature, or indeed with any thing beyond that of his own time, and rendered intolerant by the very narrowness of his range, is cut off from such sources of interest. It is only persons of a peculiar taste who will find even in the *Canterbury Tales* the perpetual beauties and sustained interest a certain school ascribes to them. Passages equal to those of later poets in power and harmony, and sometimes superior in natural touches, will be found in the three great poets of the fourteenth century, namely, the author of *Piers Ploughman*, Chaucer, and Gower. A humour quaint, dry, rich, or delicate, and racy of the English soil, will frequently be met with. A worldly wisdom, as keen as that of Bacon's in Tudor times, seems to have been an equal necessity under the Plantagenets, and the reader will often come upon maxims in the pithy lines of these writers which are still in use as proverbs. Moral philosophy, religious toleration, nay, strange as it may seem to an age that is somewhat prone to consider all times preceding it as ignorant and semi-barbarous, "advanced liberal opinions," are occasionally put forth, which, we flatter ourselves, are our own discoveries. All these

excellencies, however, are parts, counterbalanced by other parts dry, tedious, or commonplace, or at least which seem commonplace to us, though they might not have been at the time of writing.

The obstacles enumerated are common to most works of another age, or written in a language which is strange to the reader. There are circumstances connected with the fourteenth century which are further opposed to modern taste, namely, the predominance of the scholastic philosophy, the incongruities between the theory and practice of chivalry, and the opinions regarding the commerce of the sexes, rendered fashionable by the Courts of Love. Whether the real power of the scholastic philosophy had begun to decline in Chaucer's age may be matter of question, but whatever internal germs of decay existed, its direct influence over the minds of men was yet potent. In Chaucer's lifetime (1328-1400) no educated mind could escape its sway, or prevent its spirit from becoming part of his intellectual nature. Coleridge truly remarked, that the modern world is more indebted to the schoolmen than it is disposed to acknowledge; but the value is chiefly in results. Their quaint, subtle, and exhaustive reasoning, their rigorously formal logic, their metaphysical and fanciful, or at least unreal, speculations, and the abstruse character of their real topics, founded as they were on abstract entities, are not adapted to obtain popularity, at all events in our times. When the influence of the scholastic philosophy appears in medieval works in the form of didactic or religious discussion, they are likely to interest the student, whatever effect they may have on the general reader, because there is a congruity of place, and the philosophy is exhibited as it were in action. Where a storyteller exhausts an incident, as he would an argument in the schools, or a lover talks of his passion, or presses his suit in the manner of a pleader and with the spirit of a casuist, a further tediousness is added to that resulting from over-minuteness and remote manners.

The spirit of chivalry and the notions on love then prevalent gave a further peculiarity to that age, though rather moral than intellectual. More fortunate than the school philosophy, the influence of chivalry over modern society has been allowed, if not sufficiently; for to that we owe the sense of honour, the spirit of fairness, and that unique production, the modern English gentleman. Of course the practice of many knights was different from the theory of their order. Still, as a body, they would seem to have supported something of the ideal character that attaches to them in "fable or romance." The knight, in fact, was the greatest ideal of the age; the king and the ploughman being the two other ideals. The exception to this

poetical conception is in matters amatory. From the true knight, indeed, a conventional fidelity was required almost superhuman, proof against coldness, cruelty, absence, temptation, and enchantment. But morality seems to have been by no means essential. It was indifferent whether his lady was "maid, wife, or widow," or a mistress *par amour*. In the case of the famous Sir Lancelot (whose doings have lately been revived among us), neither duty, gratitude, nor honour were any sort of check to his adulterous passion; and he justifies the plain remarks of Roger Ascham on "Arthur's knights," and their "open manslaughter," and other evil-doing not to be mentioned to ears polite.

This lax sense of morality is not very surprising when we consider the course through which the world had passed. The gross and naked sensuality of the northern barbarians who overthrew the Roman Empire had combined with the corruption of the ancient civilisation. To this must be added the boundless licentiousness in which the celibate priests of a pure religion indulged themselves, and the consequent evil example to the world. Some, indeed, have ascribed this moral laxity to the Provençal poets and the "Courts of Love;" but neither the one nor the other caused medieval immorality, though they might encourage by giving it form, system, and a poetical sanction. Whatever of elevation, devotion, or "dignified obedience" was then infused into the passion of love, really originated in the spirit of chivalry. The troubadours might endow it with a metretreicious grace and an erotic logic, in form derived from the schoolmen, and in arguments from a libertine casuistry, something more than traces of which may still be found in continental writers, especially in modern fictionists of France. The stamp of *la mode*, the authority of custom, and the weight of a regular system were given by the Courts of Love. These very curious institutions would require an essay to themselves as regards origin and constitution, without, after all, leading to any sure conclusions. It is clear, however, that they consisted of ladies, and probably men, of fashion; that the court sat "in the month of May, in an open field, under an elm-tree," and considered such cases as were brought before it. The courts had no legal means of enforcing their decrees; but, such is the authority of fashion, they seem to have been obeyed. Many, perhaps most, of the cases reported are not well authenticated. One principle alone seems clearly established,—all sense of wifely fidelity or duty was disregarded, while female honour consisted at best in not being found out. The husband—*quâ* husband—had no *locus standi* against the wife or the gallant, though his existence might be recognised under some love-laws,

or to assist in bringing the whole case before the court. Here is an example of our meaning in a judgment reported to have been pronounced by Chief-Justicess Ermengarde, Viscountess of Narbonne: "Marital claims do not justify a woman in dismissing a former lover, unless she had distinctly renounced him before marriage."

It is probable that the practice under this system might not go to the extent of the theory, or the results produce so corrupt a state of society, or exercise so evil an influence upon the *general* character as might be imagined. But they certainly gave rise to tastes and opinions quite contrary to those of England in the present day, whatever may be the case on the Continent. The proceedings, perhaps as matter of precaution, partook of the nature of allegory,—the husband, for instance, was termed Danger,—and thus, doubtless, the fashion for allegorical composition was increased. The outward devotion to the sex seems to have been accompanied, as it often is, with a real sensuality and coarseness, covered by a lacker of sentiment. The strict punctilios of chivalry, united to the casuistries of the Courts of Love, created a false sense of honour in the relations of the sexes, quite opposed to all manly and healthy perception of what is right and true. All this produced an injurious literary effect on many writings of the age, in addition to the moral evil. Critics and poets have highly praised the "Flower and the Leaf," with similar allegorical pieces of Chaucer, and rightfully as respects their poetical spirit, their delicate treatment, and other artistic beauties. To such readers their very defects may have an interest, idealising, as it were, the scenery, the array, and the proceedings of these courts, without the drawbacks that always accompany to damp reality. The general public finds small attraction in allegorical stories devoid of human interest, and based upon perished fashions. A tale with human action sometimes contains a similar objection, and of a direct moral kind. A few, we repeat, may feel interested in observing the influence of apparently defunct ideas upon modern society in the country where they first originated; but to the English world at large they are repelling, if not offensive. The Franklin's story in the *Canterbury Tales* turns upon a promise which a knight's virtuous wife has made to a lover in order to get rid of him, that she will grant his suit when certain rocks in the ocean are removed. This he accomplishes by magic, and then humbly claims the fulfilment of the lady's promise, but rather to save *her* honour than *his* life. Her misery is terrible; but her husband, discovering the cause, sends his wife to the gallant rather than that her *word* should be forfeited. The lover, not to be outdone in generosity, waives the promise, and, to complete the

sentimental whole, the conjurer declines his fee. There is, we say, an interest to some readers in tracing the enduring influence of race and manners; for in the country of the Courts of Love similar trapclap would be effective now. An Englishman sees nothing in such "sentiment" but ludicrous, if not unnatural, punctilio, giving rise to the dishonour it professes to shun, and corrupting opinion, if not society, to the heart's core.

For all these reasons we believe that English medieval literature is not, and cannot become, extensively *popular*, notwithstanding the apparent evidence to the contrary of many republications, and, in a few cases, of extensive sales. This is unfortunate; for it is to our best medieval writers that all must have recourse to acquire a more vivid idea of the age than history can supply them with, and to correct some erroneous conclusions into which historians need not have fallen. It is only in these original works that we can trace the formation of the English language, and the character of the inhabitants of England, as the mixed nation was in the final act of amalgamating into Englishmen. It is only by the pictures of contemporary writers, that we can see the modes of living, thinking, acting, and feeling prevalent among our ancestors five hundred years ago, and catch glimpses, though but slight ones, of the state of the country and its industries. No secondhand account, partaking as it ever must of the idiosyncrasy of the writer, and liable to be affected by all his preconceptions of nature and habit, can ever supersede a recourse to the originals. Critical notices, accompanied by extracts, may, however, indicate the character of the best medieval productions, furnish an idea of their manner, and the matter to be found in them, as well as of the kind of light they throw upon their age. Such an attempt may also facilitate the perusal of the originals themselves, to those who may wish, or possibly be stimulated, to undertake a course of medieval reading.

But, it may be asked, what is the precise period embraced by medieval literature? And this question it is not easy to answer with rigorous exactness, just as it is difficult to determine the precise limits between "pitch dark" and "broad daylight." We can readily enough decide between one and the other; but who can fix the imperceptible gradations by which the first faint glimmer steals over darkness, the glimmer passes into dawn, and dawn into daybreak? Still there are certain points in the diurnal revolution that can readily be noted, as the appearance of the day-star, the rising of the sun, his meridian height, and his final setting. We cannot determine the appearances in English medieval literature with this astronomical exactness, for the chronology fails us. But its earliest dawn

may be placed about the reign of Edward I. (1272-1307), as its close may be properly assigned to the time of the last Plantagenet : for the *Utopia*, the first work of true philosophy by an Englishman (though originally written in Latin), and the same writer's *Richard III.*, our first history, did not mark the passing away of an old literature, but the bright sunrise of a new. According to that excellent judge Mr. Wright, the pure Anglo-Saxon had begun to break up about a century before Edward I. ; and towards the close of his reign the old language had passed into the form of English,—substantially the language of Chaucer and his contemporaries, and, in a sense, even of ourselves. Political songs, addressed to the people and burgesses, were written in such English. Under the first Edward's son and grandson (if not earlier), versified chronicles, as well as religious allegories in verse, appeared. Metrical romances were translated from the French or Anglo-Norman in the first half of the fourteenth century. The popular ballad also existed, since one of the allegorical persons in the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, representing the secular or parish parson, describes himself as competent to "rymes of Robin Hood and Randolph Erle of Chester," though he does not perfectly know the Lord's Prayer. But the sunrise of medieval English literature belongs to the latter half of the reign of Edward I., as the reign of his grandson witnessed its meridian, and his successor, the fourth Henry, saw its decline, if, indeed, the sun of English medieval literature did not "go down (with Gower) while it was yet day." Within this period of scarcely half a century, some of the most remarkable works in English literature were produced. *Mandeville's Travels*, really the first English prose work ; Wiclif's Scripture translations and his other writings ; *Piers Ploughman*, both *Vision and Creed* ; the works of Chaucer ; and Gower's English poem the *Confessio Amantis*,—all appeared between 1356 and 1400. When we consider the merit and originality of these works, and that a youth who had perused the *Travels of Mandeville* on their first publication might have read the whole of the others, as they successively appeared, before he had reached his threescore years and ten, it may be doubted whether that age could have been so rude and ignorant as some modern philosophers and some modern fanatics are pleased to represent it.

Of these works, the *Vision of Piers Ploughman* is perhaps the earliest, as it certainly is one of the most remarkable. In respect of originality, it is as extraordinary a poem as any extant ; for a large portion of it is drawn directly from the life, with little, if any, assistance from other books. How very rare

this merit is will be manifest to any reader who reflects that such a quality can only be found in the earliest authors of a nation, or in the founders of some particular branch of letters. Yet few even of such have in this point the originality of *Piers Ploughman's Vision*. Homer himself is supposed to have had predecessors who sang the wars of Troy, and versified wondrous tales of magic and mythology. The Greek drama grew up by degrees. We know from Mr. Wright's *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* that the scheme, and much of the general imagery of Dante's great work, existed ready to his hand. In like manner Shakespeare drew the greater part of his plots from books, and that not merely as to the leading design, but as to the general conduct of the action and the *dramatis personæ*, though adapted or altered with the profoundest judgment and the most wondrous art. Milton was partly indebted to others for his design and imagery, including *Piers Ploughman* itself. A few of Chaucer's comic tales perhaps are original; but the greatest number of his stories are derived from other authors, in which the groundwork of both plot and persons continues the same, however altered and enriched by the poet's genius. Beyond the allegorical form into which, unfortunately, the author of *Piers Ploughman's Vision* cast his matter and his moral and religious doctrines, drawn from philosophy or Scripture (which cannot, of course, be original except in their application), the author of *Piers Ploughman* seems to be altogether indigenious. Indeed he does not appear to have had much profane learning, nor did his work demand it. His *subject* was the condition and characteristics of English society and institutions in the latter part of Edward III.'s reign, when the wars in France had exhausted the country, and pestilence—the celebrated Black Death—had thinned the inhabitants, having, it is said, swept off nearly one half of the population on its first appearance in 1349. To these evils were added a numerous, powerful, and corrupt clergy, who filled nearly every office, lay or clerical, made use of their powers or their arts to oppress or defraud the people, interfered in the household of every one to an extent of which modern times can have no conception (unless by consulting the descriptions of contemporary writers), and swarmed through the land, even in retired places, to the banishment, as the satirist puts it, of every evil spirit but themselves. Meanwhile the oppressions of the peasantry and the poor in general had disseminated a feeling of discontent through civilised Europe, which burst forth in the Jacquerie of France, the insurrection of Wat Tyler, and (as we learn from Machiavelli) in revolutionary schemes on communistic principles among the lower artizans of Florence. Such was the subject of *Piers Ploughman*. His *object* is to exhibit

the different classes of English society, unfortunately by allegorical persons and occurrences. By means of a framework, the miseries endured by the poor are occasionally introduced, but much more frequently the frauds, vices, and extortions of the different classes above them. The aim of the author is to reform society by holding up as in a mirror its own misdeeds, by moral and religious exhortation, by expositions of Scripture, and by a complex, and, in truth, a not very intelligible, series of actions.

But the originality of *Piers Ploughman's Vision*, of the kind spoken of, is not the only remarkable feature of the poem. It is one of the most thoroughly *English* works ever written—completely native to the soil. Its language, its matter, its metre are all pure English, as well as the modes of thought and habits of life. Whether a few of Chaucer's earlier and weaker works were written before the "Vision" may be matter of question; there is no doubt but that it preceded the riper products of his genius by some, if not by many years. It must therefore rank as the first *English* poem of any length and character; more pure, indeed, in language than the "well of English undefiled" itself, since it has fewer words derived from the French. The author is so entirely English, that, except in Scriptural or theological subjects, which often take him abroad, he scarcely seems to know of or care for any other country; and his few foreign allusions are animated by somewhat of insular prejudice or contempt. The metre of the poem is genuine Anglo-Saxon. The verse (originally Icelandic) consists of a distich or couplet, with a rhythmical movement, which, skilfully managed, gratifies the ear; but there is no rhyme, and the lines are not intended to scan. A regular alliteration is its formal characteristic. This, in Anglo-Saxon poetry, was rigidly observed, though often disregarded in inferior English productions, while other irregularities grew into practice with time. The strict rule for the alliteration Mr. Wright says is, "that in every couplet there should be *two* principal words in the first line *beginning with the same letter*, which letter must also be the *initial of the first word* on which the stress of the voice falls in the second line:"

"When alle treasures are tried, quoth she,
Truth is the best."

Accustomed as we are to the variety produced by different measures, changed according to the sentiment or subject of the poem, the old Saxon verse would seem liable to monotony. It is not *felt* to be so, even in a long poem, when the measure is skilfully wielded. No one, of course, would dream of suggesting a return to this homely yet artificial scheme of versification.

Yet it may be doubted whether it was not more consonant to the genius of simple English—"English undefiled," or *unenriched*—than the various and more complex measures which Chaucer introduced or perfected, and his successors have added to.

The powers of the author of *Piers Ploughman* are considerable, though far less rare than his originality. If not always poetical, the work is pervaded by a spirit akin to poetry, strong rather than refined or elevated, and addressing itself more to the real than the ideal, but continually displaying vigorous power. Nor is this power devoid of humour or dry satire, though the writer has not the range of Chaucer, nor his wonderfully delicate distinctness in irony. The "Vision" is generally considered a satire, and doubtless satirical pictures abound. But reformation, not mere attack, was the object of the author. He is more anxious for the worldly good conduct and the spiritual wellbeing of men than is a common satirist. When priests neglect their immediate duties, thronging to London as to a centre of preferment, flattering the backslidings of lords and ladies, and giving them easy absolution for money, he is not drawn to sarcasm, but excited to anger. To see priests filling secular offices in noble households or public employ, which leave them insufficient time even to say their (numerous) prayers properly, or when they procure advancement by simony, the Monk of Malvern is not stimulated to mere denouncement, but moved to indignation, tempered by sorrow. The frauds or licentiousness of nearly every one in any way connected with the Church are not to him, as to so many other medieval satirists, English and foreign, a subject for jocular exposure. They are deadly sins, matter for grief, not for scornful merriment. However, he does not himself consider licentiousness so general a vice among the clergy of the age as do many writers. There are numbers, he says, who are clean of their bodies, but avarice has griped them so hard, that they cannot put it away. And their future condition is only *too* assured. "Chastite withouten charite," he holds, shall "be cheyned in helle." In like manner, the vices, frauds, and ill-living of laymen are represented as serious things; and though the author sometimes relates in a dry grin, he seldom indulges in mere merriment, though he may produce the effect of pleasantry upon the reader. He is sometimes tolerant, and often sensible, in his practical conclusions. In one feature he resembles satirists in general—he is too abstract. He requires from mankind an adherence to the commands of Scripture, and the ideal principles of a severe philosophy, which the mass have never yet exhibited, and apparently never will, till human nature is changed.

The poem is considered by the best authorities to have been written between 1352 and 1362, but probably it was finished a little later than the last of these dates. Of the author nothing is known. A tradition, existing in the early part of the sixteenth century, represents him as born at Cleobury Mortimer, in Shropshire, educated at Oxford, and subsequently becoming a Monk of Malvern. The tradition calls him Robert Longlande, or Langlande. In the poem the dreamer (that is, the author) is termed Wil (William), and he is described as having a wife and daughter. This, as Mr. Wright observes, does not necessarily establish the fact of his Christian name or his marriage. But more weight is to be attached to the name (for the choice of which there is no particular reason) than to "Kytte my wif," and "Calotte my daughter," who may be considered dramatically appropriate, and who take slight parts in one of the incidents. At the opening of the twelfth "passus," or chapter, some lines (7437-7460) are put into the mouth of Ymaginatif addressing the dreamer, which seem clearly autobiographical. From these the author would appear to have then reached forty-five, to have been "wilde" in his youth, to have amended in his "middel age," and to have suffered much affliction from pestilence, from poverty, and from those bitter "baleises" (rods) with which God beateth his dear children; and these things he interpreted as warnings.

From all this nothing can be proved as to the identity of the author, since there is nothing that is really *evidence*. But there is no reasonable doubt that he was a monk, and of Malvern, and that he had been educated at Oxford or some other university. The waking scenes of his poem are laid among the Malvern Hills, and the author exhibits a close familiarity with the features of the district. That he was connected with the Church is obvious from many circumstances. His profound sense of a Scriptural religion, and wonderful acquaintance (for his age) with the Scriptures and Fathers, if not absolutely conclusive, is very nearly so; for till the Reformation a man could only teach and urge religion in safety by connecting himself with the Church. Neither was it likely that a layman, however spiritually minded, would have acquired the extent of theological knowledge exhibited by the Monk of Malvern, since, speaking with reference to human probability, its acquisition must have begun early in life. Religious reformation is a great aim of the poem; the duties of mankind, the abstract excellence of the Catholic Church, and the corruption of living churchmen, are the predominant topics. For though he continually leaves them to describe other classes, he continually returns to the Church. The author, too, has a knowledge of ecclesiastical business, especially of the abuses and

practices of the Ecclesiastical Courts, which a layman was not likely to have attained. His knowledge of life also seems of a kind that points to the priesthood. In those days any priest, much less a clergyman of learning, activity, and character, could get access to the houses of the great, and in a manner to themselves. But we suspect it was only the highest classes of the priesthood, or some individual confidant, and perhaps only the latter, that saw them in close intimacy. This kind of external or superficial acquaintance with the great is the knowledge possessed by the Monk of Malvern. He has seen them in the hall, he has sat with them at table, he has heard their after-dinner conversation; but he does not seem to have come closer than this with lay barons, or with very high dignitaries of the Church; and hence, perhaps, some of his intolerance towards them. With the middle and lower classes he is thoroughly acquainted, in part probably through the confessional. Much of his knowledge, however, has been derived from that actual experience of life which an active priest of those days, moving about every where, and interfering in every thing, could not but acquire. It is with these classes, too, that his real sympathies reside, and that mainly with the agriculturists and the very poor. With regard to what may be called the professional classes he entertains the vulgarest notions of the present day. It is the intemperance of men which gives rise to physicians, whose utility after all is more than doubtful, since

"Murthereris are manye leches;
They do men deye thorough hir (their) drynkes,
Ere destyne it wolde;"

and as for lawyers, even their future safety is very doubtful. When the conditions of salvation are announced by Piers, and accepted by many classes,

"Men of lawe leest pardon hadde;"

not so much for their vocation as their greediness, and refusing to open their mouths without money. Profit, if fair, he allows to be honest; but he attributes so much fraud to the traders of his time, in false measures, false weights, and adulterations, that the sum of honest profits must be reduced greatly. It is worthy of note, that so strict a man should consider that gold gotten by a minstrel for his "meerths" and "glee" is "giltless;" but jesters, buffoons, and others of a like class, he shortly characterises as "Judas children." The ploughman, or small tenant farmer, was, like the knight, an ideal of those days. As already observed, the ploughman is, after a fashion, the hero of the poem. In the "Creed" and the *Canterbury Tales*, as well as in the "Vision," the ploughman is represented as very poor, and but

for the minuteness of the description we should say that he was an ideal, *because* he was an unknown. But still lower classes than ploughmen were great objects of the Monk of Malvern's yearnings. His sympathies well out upon the vast mass of the *people* living day by day as they could, nor does he exclude the vagrants and "valiant (stout, able-bodied) beggars," whom Parliament, a few years later, denounced so sternly, and dealt with so savagely. The distress and sufferings of this class are a not unfrequent subject with *Piers Ploughman*. They are treated with something of that merciful tenderness, towards the woes of poor men, merely as human beings, which, "not to speak it profanely," endows with poetry the "dogs" and "sores" of Lazarus.

"For muche murthe (mirth) is amonges riche,
 As in mete and clothyng;
 And muche murthe in May is
 Amonges wilde beestes,
 And so forth while somer lasteth
 Hir (their) solace dureth.
 Ac (but) beggeris aboute Midsomer
 Bred-lees thei (they) slepe.
 And yet is wynter for hem (them) worse,
 For weet shoed thei gone,
 A-furst (athirst) soore and a-fyngred (hungered),
 And foule y-rebuked,
 And a-rated of riche men
 That ruthe (pity) is to here.
 Now, Lord, sende hem (them) somer,
 And som maner (of) joye,
 Hevene after hir hennes goyng,
 That here han (have) swich defaute,
 For alle* myghtestow (thou) have maad
 Noon mener than oother,
 And y-liche witty and wise,
 If thee wel hadde liked.
 Lord, * * * * *
 Conforte tho (those) creatures,
 That muche care suffren (suffer)
 Thorough derthe, thorough droghte,
 Alle hir (their) dayes here,
 Wo in wynter tymes
 For wantynge of clothes,
 And in somer tyme selde (seldom)
 Soupen to the fulle.
 Conforte thi carefulle (full of care),
 Crist, in thi richesse;
 For how thow confortest alle creatures,
 Clerkes bereth witnesse."

pp. 283, 284.

The plan of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, and still more its development, are exceedingly faulty. The story—"if shape

* Alle, the plural; the singular is al.

it might be called, which shape had none"—has all the defects of incongruity and strained resemblances which belong to allegory; it is also obscure and complicated in conduct, and unsatisfactory in conclusion. The early part forms the picture already mentioned of English society in the latter half of Edward the Third's reign. Then there is a pilgrimage in search of "Dowel," "Do-bet," and "Do-best," not very intelligibly conceived, or clearly carried on; but it serves to introduce a great number of religious and moral exhortations, contemporary sketches, allegories of the virtues, and scriptural narratives or legends. Piers Ploughman originally appears as an allegorical reformer, giving lessons to the different classes of society on their respective duties: he is continually on the scene doing or saying something; but his influence on the action is slight, and, indeed, there is hardly any action in the poem, in the critical sense of action. To follow the story in detail would be uselessly tedious; but some idea of it is necessary to comprehend the nature of the poem, or to appreciate any passages taken from it.

At the outset, the author represents himself as walking on "Malverne hilles" on a May morning. Lulled by the sound of a bourne's waters, he falls asleep on its bank, and dreams a marvellous vision. Mankind—"alle manere of men"—appear before him, from king and cardinals down to beggars; the leading characteristics of each class being marked with breadth and truth, though somewhat harshly, while the features are all English. This survey is interrupted by an exposition of the formation of government in its kingly form. The origin of political power is traced to the people, with a distinctness that might satisfy a modern republican. "Might of the communes made hym (the king) to regne." The administration of the government is confided to knights and clerkes, who are to counsel the king "the commune to save." The part actually assigned to the people, when once government is established, is that of prudent submission to existing rulers, lest greater should come by change. And this idea is illustrated by an *improvement* on the fable of belling the cat.

This is introductory. In the first "passus," or chapter, the scene remains the same; but "Holy Church" appears in the form of a lovely lady, and lays down a system of moral philosophy, based for the most part on Scripture. Its fundamental position is, that man needs but three things, namely, clothes, meat, and drink; and that morality, as regards his body, chiefly consists in moderation, especially in drink. The social and general virtues are truth, kindness, or charity, and love; without them, indeed, all other virtues are of no avail.

The second, third, and fourth chapters are principally occu-

pied with the episode of Mede, designed to represent bribery and every species of corrupt rewards, in opposition to income, rent, earnings, and honest profits. The Lady Mede is dressed most richly, is familiar with courts and great people, particularly with popes, cardinals, and Church dignitaries, and is about to be married to Falsehood. All people who profit by fraud or corruption are bidden to the wedding, and a goodly lot there is, especially from the ecclesiastical and other courts. Favel (cajoler, deceiver) leads the bride from her chamber; Liar produces the marriage settlement, which is read by Simony and Cyvyle to the assembled guests, to whom it promises great advantages. All is going cheerily, when Theology intervenes to forbid the marriage, and appeals to the king. The instant submission of such powerful personages and "interests" may seem strange, unless the reader remembers the law of wardship, and that no heiress of importance could marry without the sovereign's sanction. The journey to "Westmynstere" is treated with the grotesque jocularly of the middle ages. Officers and practitioners of the law are turned into beasts of burden or draught. Mede rides upon a sheriff, "shoed al newe." Falsehood sits upon a sisour,* "that softeli trotted." Bishops are borne by inferior clergy, caparisoned with silver. Liar is turned into a "Lang cart." The king receives the Lady Mede with kindly courtesy; but her *entourage*, and following, having heard of his displeasure and threats against them, run away. Falsehood takes refuge with the friars; Guile with the traders; but Liar has a difficulty in housing himself, till the Pardoners take him in. They wash him, dress him, and send him to churches to sell pardons. This stimulates physicians to call for him "on watres to look," and his engagements soon extend to various

* Sisours. Mr. Wright defines "sisour" as "a person deputed to hold assizes." This he was in a certain sense; but the definition does not convey a correct idea to modern minds. The sisour was really a juror, though differing greatly in functions and in position from what jurymen subsequently became (vide the 6th chapter of Forsyth's *History of Trial by Jury*). The truest notion of the sisour of the text seems to be found in the "Tale of Gamelyn," a sort of Robin-Hood story, printed in the *Canterbury Tales*, though not written by Chaucer. A wicked elder brother has cheated Gamelyn out of his estate, driven him by his cruelty to the woods, and tries to get him hanged by (*inter alia*) packing and corrupting a jury;

"For he was fast about bothe day and other,
For to hyre the quest to hangen his brother."

When Gamelyn's young men have seized judge, sheriff, and jury in open court, their leader concludes a somewhat minacious address with this crumb of comfort for the gentlemen of the jury:

"And the twelve sisours that weren of the quest,
They schui ben hanged this day, so have I reste."

Sisours were very unpopular, and seem to have been corrupt.

other crafts. Meantime judges, "clerkes," an indulgent confessor, and numerous other persons throng about Mede, and proffer their services in the matter of her marriage, or any thing else. The king, however, determines on uniting her to Conscience; but the intended bridegroom denounces the character and doings of Mede in a powerful and very plain declamation, to which the lady speciously replies. Reason, being appealed to, approves of the unwillingness of Conscience. The king is brought to look moodily on Mede, and determines henceforth to govern by Conscience and Reason. Before this conclusion is reached, an episode intervenes, cognate enough to administrative and legal corruption and abuses. Peace brings Wrong before the king in Parliament, charging him with the commission of much violence and oppression. Wrong is committed, when Wisdom and Wit, having been properly dealt with, combine with Mede to procure his pardon; but the king and Reason stand firm. The indictment, which Peace lays before the House, has been considered a relation of feudal oppressions, "too nice and yet too true." Probably it may be, so far that such instances might occur; that they all occurred at one place, or were of common occurrence, is not probable. At the same time, the disturbed period in which the writer lived might render acts of violence more frequent than usual, as the absence of the king, as well as of the barons and leading gentry in the wars of France, might lead to many abuses of delegated authority.

"And thanne (then) com Pees into parlement,
And putte forth a bille,
How Wrong ayeins (against) his wille
Hadde his wif taken,
And how he ravysshede Rose
Reginaldes loove,
And Margrete of her maydenhede
Maugree hire chekes.

"Bothe my gees and my grys (pigs)
Hise gadelynges (vagabonds, say "rowdies") feccheth,
I dar noght for fere of hem (them)
Fighte ne chide.
He borwed (borrowed) of me Bayard (a horse),
He broughte hym hom nevere,
Ne no ferthyng therfore,
For ought I koude plede.
He maynteneth hise men
To murthere myne hewen (hinds),
Forstalleth my feires (fairs),
And fighteth in my chepyng,*
And breketh up my bernes (barn's) dore,
And bereth away my whete,

* Market, sale. We have the word still in *Eastcheap*, *Cheapside*. The meaning seems to be that the violence and quarrels of loose and disorderly men put a stop to regular business in the public markets.

And taketh me but a taillé*
 For ten quarters of otes;
 And yet he beteth me therto,
 And lyth by my mayde.
 I am noght hardy for hym
 Unnethe (scarcely) to loke.
 The kyng knew he seide sooth,
 For Conscience hym tolde
 That Wrong was a wikked luft (fellow),
 And wroghte muche sorwe (sorrow).
 Wrong was afered thanne,
 And Wisdom he soughte,
 To maken (infin.) pees with hise pens (pennies);
 And proffed him manye,
 And seide, 'Hadde I love of my lord the kyng,
 Litel wolde I recche,
 Theigh (though) Pees and his power
 Pleynd hym evere.'"

pp. 68, 69.

The fifth chapter is one of the most striking in the poem. The dreamer awakes, as he often does, but soon falls asleep again, and continues his vision. He sees the king, accompanied by his knights, go to church, and Reason preaches a sermon on repentance to all the realm. Unlike sermons in general, the good effect of Reason's is immediate. Various persons—representatives of classes, or of personified vices—come to shrive themselves. The confessions they make of their respective doings are not always of the most delicate kind; but the pictures the confessions successively introduce present a very vivid idea of the age in its coarser features. The allegory is lost in the distinct idiosyncrasy and vigorous delineation of the characters, as is indeed the case throughout. It is, perhaps, significant of the author that the higher or the regular clergy (friars, monks, &c.) do not appear to show signs of repentance, or any of the noble or professional classes. The author's predilections for the poor are further indicated by his attributing the most heartfelt repentance to "Roberd the Robbere."

Thus far the allegory is, to some extent, a regular narrative. We may suppose the writer intends to embody the origin and practice of kingly government, the state of England in his time, and the forms in which the grosser vices of the people of all ranks were developed. These two last subjects, indeed, are never lost sight of. From the midst of a confused allegory, or a theological

* Tally. Notched sticks by which accounts were kept, the notches *tallying* with one another. We still have the word in tally-shops; the word and meaning in "will it tally?" The office of Tallyer (teller) was maintained in the Exchequer to our day, and was, of course, a mere sinecure, modern sums defying such a primitive system of accounts. The practice, as a mode of "double entry," would seem to have survived till Pope's time:

"From him whose quills stand quivered at his ear,
 To him who notches sticks at Westminster."

or moral disquisition, the author continually returns to "the condition-of-England question," and the vices, pride, and self-indulgence of the clergy. But to attempt to unravel the narratives in which his pictures are henceforth introduced would be unprofitably tedious. Piers the Ploughman tills the ground, with the Evangelists for oxen, in order to raise a crop of virtues. He calls upon Hunger—a very powerfully drawn personage—to punish Waster, who will not work; and he puts forth many rules of life, distinguished by good sense, and sometimes by wisdom. The pilgrim in search of "Do-wel," "Do-bet," "Do-best," wanders through many ways, passes by many edifices, and encounters many persons, all allegorical, and often personifying the human body, the faculties of the mind, or the virtues, and occasionally reminding the reader of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. But the Monk of Malvern wants the constructive instinct of Bunyan. The action is indistinct, and the conclusion unsatisfactory and imperfect.

The matter of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman* is always good, frequently excellent. Even the versions of Scripture, or of the legends founded upon it, as well as the more professional theology, have a curious interest for the studious reader, as illustrating the religious ideas, or the school-philosophy of the age. For the author's own day the workmanship, perhaps, surpassed the material. Even now the execution has strong claims upon the attention. Besides the qualities already touched upon, the Monk of Malvern exhibits deep thought, terseness, sometimes felicity, of expression, and a remarkable power of vigorous and graphic delineation of character, so powerful, indeed, as continually to endow an allegorical person with the reality of life. It is this quality which has mainly sustained the work, and may yet revive its study. Popularity in the common sense of the word it is never likely to recover, on account of the unskilful manner in which its author treated what should have been a story.

Still, after all its faults, the literary merits of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman* are very great, apart from its value as a picture of the times, and as the first specimen, upon any large scale, of genuine English composition. To appreciate the merits of the author we must put ourselves in his position. The instrument he had to use was a language yet unformed, and limited to popular ballads, versified chronicles, dull religious poems, and tales of knight-errantry. When the vast design he proposed to himself is considered, and the utter want of any precedent in which he could properly embody his conceptions, the confused nature of his plan or plot is hardly to be wondered at. Allegory was the fashion of his day, and the famous French

Roman de la Rose, if more artistically treated than the "Vision," is even more artificial and absurd in its scheme. Stern as was the Monk of Malvern when morality or religion were at stake, he had in him much of the milk of human kindness. Unless in his angry moods, a vein of quaint satire or quiet pleasantry runs through the work, giving it a pungent savour. Coarse he undoubtedly is occasionally; but it was simply the plainness of his time, such as we see it in the religious art, and find it in the pious books, of the middle or later ages. The Monk of Malvern never travels out of his way to seek grossness, much less licentiousness. When they belong to his subject, he speaks of natural things in plain words. And probably some of this plainness originated with the practice of the confessional, which, if it does not corrupt the minds of priests and people, must assuredly banish all sense of physical delicacy. The most striking literary characteristic of the Monk of Malvern—that which gives his work its most remarkable feature, and endows allegory and abstraction with life—is vigorous delineation. It may have the grotesqueness of medieval sculpture, and the stiff quaintness of medieval painting; but images are presented with more force and distinctness, and leave a stronger impression, than in higher and more advanced schools of art, unless when subjects are handled by the greatest masters.

Akin to the vigorous delineation of *Piers Ploughman's Vision* is the evident truthfulness of its representations. The satirists of those days, whether of England, France, or Italy, were men of genius, wit, and pleasure, despising the clergy for the logical inconsistency between their religious profession and their profligate lives, though their own practice might be little better than that of the men they held up to odium or ridicule. It is also possible that they exaggerated and coloured for the sake of artistical effect. From these drawbacks the Monk of Malvern appears to be free. There is an adherence to nature in his depictions which seem to guarantee his truthfulness. His account of conventual life, especially in the ladies' houses, is an example. A modern reader, with notions of women bricked up in walls for breach of vows, or with the more poetical idea of

"Deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells,"

will regard its daily life of scandal, love of snug comforts, and weak though violent quarrelling, as commonplace. Yet how real is the picture!

"I have an aunte to nonne,
And an abbesse bothe;
Hir hadde levere (rather) swowe or swelte (swoon or die),

Than suffre any peyne,
 I have be (been) cook in hir (their) kichene,
 And the covent served
 Manye monthes with hem,
 And with monkes bothe.
 I was the prioresse potager,
 And othere povere (poor) ladies,
 And maad hem (them) joutes of janglyng (combats of words),
 That dame Johane was a bastard,
 And dame Clarice a knyghtes doughter,
 Ac (and) a cokewold was hir sire;
 And dame Pernele a preestes fyle (woman, girl, in a bad sense),
 Prioresse worth she (will she be) nevere,
 For she hadde child in chirie-tyme,
 Al our chapitre (chapter) it wiste (knew).
 Of wikkede wordes
 I Wrathe hire (their) wortes made,
 Til 'thow lixt' (liest) and 'thow lixt'
 Lopen out at ones,
 And either hite oother
 Under the cheke;
 Hadde thei had knyves, by Crist!
 Hir (of them) either hadde kild oother." p. 86.

The monks maintained a somewhat harder discipline, at least "against telling tales out of school," and enforced it in a truly *scholastic* way.

"Among monkes I myghte be,
 Ac (but) many tyme I shonye it;
 For there ben (be) manye felle frekes (fellows)
 My feeris (companions) to aspie,
 Bothe priour and suppriour
 And oure *pater abbas*;
 And if I telle any tales,
 Thei taken hem (them) togideres,
 And doon (do) me faste frydayes
 To breed and to watre,
 And am chalanged in the chapitre hous,
 As I a child were,
 And baleised (birched, *rodded*) on the bare * * *
 And no brech bitwene.
 For-thi (therefore) have I no likyng
 With tho (those) leodes (lads) to wonye (dwell).
 I ete there unthende fisse (without sauce),
 And feble ale drynke;
 Ac outhur while whan wyn cometh,
 Thanne I drynke wyn at eve,
 And have a flux of a foul mouth
 Wel fyve dayes after." p. 87.

Whatever might have been the indulgences, vices, or frauds of the regular clergy, they were superior to the secular in point of learning and activity. The monk, or higher dignitary, is generally painted as possessing that degree of apparent respectability, not to say of personal dignity, which education,

property, and position usually impart. The mendicant friars are not troubled with dignity; but they exhibit activity, great skill in begging from, and imposing upon, the people, with a "powerful" oratory of a platform kind. The sloth and ignorance of the secular clergy, which led to the institution of the mendicant friars, does not seem to have been changed by rivalry. The only stimulus applied was to their evil passions. Chaucer's good parson is drawn as a secular. But the case was exceptional, if not an exception for *political* objects, existing only in the author's mind. The "parson" of the Monk of Malvern is a sad picture of low vices and ignorant inattention to his duties. Yet, sad as it is, we suspect it might have been matched by the sporting and port-wine parson of the last century, if full allowance be made for the spread of education, and the greater decency and power of public opinion. The confession is put into the mouth of Sloth:

"I kan noght parfitly my pater-noster,
As the preest it syngeth;
But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood,
And Randolf erl of Chestre;
Ac (but) neither of oure Lord ne of oure Lady
The leeste that evere was maked.
I have maad avowes (vows) fourty,
And foryete (forget) hem on the morwe (morrow)
I perfournede nevere penaunce
As the preest me highte (prescribed);
Ne right sory for my synnes
Yet was I nevere.
And if I bidde any bedes (say any prayers),
But if (unless) it be in wrathe,
That I telle with my tonge
Is two myle fro myn herte.
I am ocupied eche day,
Haly-day (Holy-day) and oother,
With ydel tales at the ale (ale-house),
And outhur while at chirche;
Goddess payne and his passion
Ful selde (seldom) thenke I on it.
I visited nevere feble men,
Ne fettred folk in puttes (pits, cells,—in prison);
I have levere (rather) here an harlotrye,
Or a somer game of souters,
Ot lesynge (lies, tales) to laughen at
And bi-lye my neghebores,
Than al that evere Marc made,
Mathew, Johan, and Lucas.
And vigilies and fastyng-dayes,
Alle thise late (let) I passe;
And ligge a-bedde in Lenten,
And my lemman in myne armes,
Til matyns and masse be do,
And thanne go to the freres (friars).

Come I to *Ite, missa est*,*
 I holde me y-served;
 I nam noght (am not) shryven som tyme,
 But if (unless) siknesse it make,
 Nought twyes in two yer,
 And thanne up (by) gesse I shryve me.
 I have be (been) preest and parson
 Passynge thritty wynter,
 And yet can I neyther solnet ne synge,
 Ne seintes lyves rede;
 But I kan fynden (find) in a feld,
 Or in a furlang, an hare,
 Better than in *Beatus vir*,
 Or in *Beati omnes*,
 Construe oon clause wel
 And kenne (teach) it to my parissheis (parishioners).
 I kan holde love-dayes,
 And here a reves (bailiff's) rekenyng;
 Ac (but) in canon nor in decretals
 I kan noght rede a lyne.
 If I bigge and borwe aught (beg or borrow),
 But if (unless) it be y-tailed (a tally given),
 I foryete it as yerne (readily);
 And if men me it axe
 Sixe sithes (times) or sevene,
 I forsake (deny, repudiate) it with othes;
 And thus tene (injure) I trewe men
 Ten hundred tymes.
 And my servauntz som tyme
 Hir (their) salarie is bi-hynde;
 Ruthe it is to here the rekenyng,
 Whan we shul rede accountes.
 So with wikked wil and wrathe,
 My werkmen I paye."

pp. 101-103.

The ignorance of "Barons bold" during the middle ages, and their contented credulity in matters involving intellectual exertion, is a common topic of ridicule or sneer. Their incapacity, and that of classes below them, even in reading and writing, is constantly advanced as a self-evident truth. But these notions are certainly exaggerated, and, as regards the fourteenth century, are, we believe, untrue. Not merely writing, but accomplishments of a literary and artistical kind, were common to the gentry class, if not to the classes below it. Chaucer's squire not only wrote poetry, or at least songs, but could draw and paint ("purtray," probably illuminate). The young wife and the squire in the *Merchant's Tale* (January and May) can both write, to whatever purpose they turn the accomplishment; and, indeed, it seems to have been a thing of course. "Reading, writing, and arithmetic," however, are in themselves

* The concluding sentence of the service of the Mass.

† Solne, 'sing by note.' The meaning is, "I cannot sing by note, or by ear, correctly."

the mere mechanics of education, and may exist with gross ignorance in other respects. Under the third Edward and his grandson, there seems to have been a good deal of general knowledge, and, what is as much as knowledge, of thought. Yet one would scarcely have supposed that the heroes of Crecy and Poitiers meditated on theology, and especially the Fall, and were in their way as dangerous (at a dinner-table) as the authors of *Essays and Reviews* are to the reading world of their generation. Yet such seems to have been the case.

“ I have y-herd heighe men,
 Etynge at the table,
 Carpen (talking)* as thei clerkes were,
 Of Crist, and of hise myghtes ;
 And leyden (laying) fautes upon the fader
 That formede us alle,
 And carpen* ayein clerkes
 Crabbede wordes.
 Why wolde oure Saveour suffre
 Swich a worm (serpent) in his blisse,
 That bigiled the womman,
 And the man after ?
 Thorugh whiche wiles and wordes
 Thei wente to helle,
 And al hir (their) seed for hir synne
 The same deeth suffrede.
 Here lyeth youre lore,
 Thise lordes gynneth dispute,
 Of that the clerkes us kenneth
 Of Crist by the Gospel :
Filius non portabit iniquitatem patris, etc.
 Why sholde we that now ben (be),
 For the werkes of Adam,
 Roten and to rende ? (Be destroyed ; literally, rot,
 and be rent.)
 Reson wolde it nevere.
Unusquisque portabit onus suum, etc.
 Swiche motyves thei mene,
 Thise maistres in hir (their) glorie,
 And maken men in mys-bileve
 That muse muche on hire (their) wordes,
 Ymaginatif herafterwarde
 Shal answer to hir (their) purpos.” pp. 179, 180.

The age was degenerating in other things besides religious belief. Hospitality was falling off, avarice was creeping on, and the great were becoming “exclusive.” They no longer sat in the hall, but withdrew to a “pryvee parlour,” which was perhaps as well, when they talked infidelity.

* Carpen. This word survives in the sense of “to cavil,” “to find fault,” “to censure unfairly,” but has lost the meaning “to talk,” &c. This sense appears to be attached to the first word in the extract, and cavil to the second.

"Elenge (mournful) is the halle
 Ech day in the wike,
 Ther the lord ne the lady
 Liketh noght to sitte.
 Now hath ech riche a rule
 To eten (eat) by hymselfe
 In a pryvee parlour,
 For povere mennes sake,
 [On account of their presence,]
 Or in a chambre with a chymenee (chimney),
 And leve the chief halle
 That was maad for meles,
 Men to eten inne,
 And al to spare to spende
 That spille shal another."
 [*i.e.* Saving for the heir to squander.] p. 179.

The humbler classes, however, are more frequent topics with the Monk of Malvern than the higher. And his pictures would seem to show that the *people* now are, in many cases, very like their forefathers under the Plantagenets. After every fair allowance is made for the exaggeration of temperance lecturers and orators, intemperance is yet an undoubted cause of much discomfort and even misery among the working-classes. It was doubtless grosser, it was probably greater, in the days of Edward III., though many things have to be considered before that conclusion can be reached. At all events, the following broad picture of "jollity and good company" at "the ale" five hundred years ago might yet be matched in certain places. Glutton, the allegorical chief actor, has been moved to repentance by Reason's great sermon, and starts for church to get shriven, but is intercepted on his way by a "brewestere" (breweress, female ale-house keeper).

"Now bi-gynneth Gloton
 For to go to shrifte,
 And karieth hym to kirke-warde
 His coupe to shewe ;
 And Beton the brewestere
 Bad hym good morwe,
 And asked at hym with that,
 Whider-ward he wolde.
 'To holy chirche,' quod he,
 'For to here masse,
 And sithen (afterwards) I wole be shryven,
 And synne na-moore.'
 'I have good ale, gossib,' quod she,
 'Gloton, woltow assaye ?'
 'Hastow ought in thi purs ?' quod he,
 'Any hote spices ?'
 'I have pepir (pepper) and piones,*' quod she,

* Seeds of the piony; all these so-called spices seem to have been used as correctives, furnishing an excuse to the toper.

'And a pound of garleek,
And a ferthyng-worth of fenel-seed
For fastyngge dayes.'

Thanne goth Glotin in,
And grete othes after.
Cesse the souteresse (female shoemaker)
Sat on the benche;
Watte the warner (warrener),
And his wif bothe;
Tymme the tynkere,
And tweyne of his prentices;
Hikke the hakeney-man,
And Hughe the nedlere (maker or seller of needles);
Clarice of Cokkeslane,
And the clerk of the chirche;
Dawe the dykere (ditcher),
And a dozeyne othere."

pp. 95, 96.

Some of these dozen are enumerated, and a sort of mock raffle ensues for Clement's cloke and Hikke's hood, the apparent object being a "treat." Then

"There was laughynge and lourynge,
And 'lat go the cuppe';
And seten so til even-song,
And songen (singing) umwhile,
Til Gloton hadde y-glubbed (sucked in)
A galon and a gille.
* * * * *

He myghte neither steppe ne stonde,
Er he his staf hadde;
And thanne gan he to go
Like a gle-mannes bicche,
Som tyme aside,
And som tyme arere,
As who so leith lynes
For to lacche foweles (catch birds).
And whan he drough to the dore,
Thanne dymmed hise eighen (eyes);
He stumbled on the thresshold,
And threw to the erthe.
Clement the cobelere
Kaighte hym by the myddel,
For to liffen hym o-lofte;
And leyde hym on his knowes (knees).
Ac (and) Gloton was a gret cherl,
And a grym in the lifyng,
And koughed up a cawdel
In Clementes lappe;
Is noon so hungry hound
In Hertford shire
Dorste lape of that levynges,
So un-lovely thei smaughte (smelled).
With al the wo of this world,
His wif and his wenche (servant-girl)
Baren hym hom to his bed,

And broughte hym therinne;
 And after al this excesse
 He hadde an accidie (fit of exhaustion),
 That he sleep Saterday and Sonday,
 Til sonne yede (went) to reste.

Thanne waked he of his wynkyng,
 And wipid hise eighen;
 The firste worde that he warpe (uttered)
 Was 'where is the bolle?' (bowl)"

pp. 97-99.

Unless in extreme cases, the particular seasons have little general effect upon the well-being of modern society, although certain trades suffer from slackness owing to fashion or weather. It was not so, even with the rich, to a comparatively late period. The simple agriculture of our ancestors supplied but scanty fodder and no roots for the cattle. The larger part consequently had to be slaughtered at the end of autumn, and salted down for winter and spring consumption. Even the highest classes had to live chiefly on salt meat, especially when landlords resided on their estates. This food, with scarcely any vegetable diet, would naturally breed an ill habit of body, that doubtless rendered the epidemic diseases of the middle ages so fatal. These circumstances made summer and an early harvest-time very important to our ancestors. It was not merely warmth and pleasant weather, delightful as they are, but the *food* they brought with them. There is a scene in *Piers Ploughman* which strikingly illustrates this peculiarity of the times, and the different articles of food to which the people had recourse before harvest. It also illustrates the thoughtlessness of the poor, which unfortunately yet remains. When Piers calls for Hunger to punish Waster, he comes; but he will not go away, and all struggle to feed him, till the harvest.

"Al the povere peple tho (then)
 Pescoddes fetten (fetched),
 Benes and baken apples
 Thei broghte in hir (their) lappes,
 Chibolles (a kind of leek) and chervelles (a pot-herb),
 And ripe chiries manye,
 And profrede Piers this present
 To plesse with Hunger.

Al Hunger eet in haste,
 And axed after moore.
 Thanne povere folk, for fere,
 Fedden Hunger yerne (eagerly),
 With grene poret (a leek) and pesen (peas),
 To poisone hym thei thoghte.
 By that it neghed neer hervest,
 And newe corn cam to chepyng (market);
 Thanne was folk fayn (glad),
 And fedde Hunger with the beste,
 With goode ale, as Gloton taghte,

And garte (made) Hunger go slepe.
 And tho wolde Wastour noght werche,
 But wandren (wandered) aboute,
 Ne no beggere ete breed
 That benes inne were,
 But of coket and cler-matyn,*
 Or ellis of clene whete;
 Ne noon halpenny ale
 In none wise drynke,
 But of the beste and of the brunneste (brownest)
 That in burghe is to selle.

Laborers that have no land
 To lyve on but hire handes,
 Deyned noght to dyne a day
 Nyght-olde wortes (stale vegetables);
 May no peny ale hem (them) paye,
 Ne no pece of bacon,
 But if (unless) it be fresshe flessch outhur (or) fissehe,
 Fryed outhur (or) y-bake.

* * * * *

He (the labourer) greveth hym ageyn God,
 And gruccheth ageyn Reson,
 And thanne corseth he the kyng,
 And al his counseil after,
 Swiche lawes to loke
 Laborers to greve.†
 Ac (but) whiles Hunger was hir maister,
 Ther wolde noon of hem chide,
 Ne stryven ayeins his statut,
 So sterneliche he loked."

pp. 134-137.

A volume of pictures such as these might be taken from the poem, varying in subjects, but all illustrative of the manners, religion, or theology of the period. Enough, however, has been quoted to indicate the nature of the work. It is time, too, to quit the "Vision" for the "Creed." In certain palpable or technical points this latter production is, what it has often been called, an imitation of the "Vision." The versification is the same. The "Creed" is likewise a species of monologue narrative; for although it mainly consists of dialogue, the whole is told in the first person; while the title, *The Creed of Piers Ploughman*, was obviously suggested by the popularity which had attached to the name of Piers. In some essential points, however, there are broad distinctions between the two works. Though a zealous reformer of the priesthood, the Monk of Malvern was a firm believer in the doctrines and dogmas of the Romish Church. The author of the "Creed" was a Wicliffite and a heretic, or at least a favourer

* Finer kinds than bean bread.

† The Statute of Labourers had not passed long before, in 1350. It enforced labour, regulated the rate of wages, and fixed the prices of provisions. Labourers, however, had not the meaning now attached to the word, but rather meant men in the position of modern artisans.

of heretics. Although his work was to a certainty written upwards of thirty years after the "Vision," the English is inferior, being crabbed and more uncouth, as if the author were writing in a provincial dialect. His literature, too, is inferior to that of the Monk of Malvern, although the greater part of Chaucer's works, if not the whole, were published before he wrote, and probably Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. From the limitation of the action of the *dramatis personæ* in the "Creed" to the poor and to the friars, as well as from its inferiority in literary character, the author would seem to have occupied a lower social position than the Monk of Malvern, or to have enjoyed fewer advantages. This, however, is mere conjecture, for about him nothing whatever is known. In those essential qualities which must maintain the interest of a work,—namely, poetical spirit, perceptive faculty, and the power of presenting what is seen,—the "Creed" is nearly equal to the "Vision." In structure it is far superior to its prototype. Not only does the writer drive directly to his object, scarcely ever leaving it, but the author's design is inextricably connected with the story. Whether in his own development, or reduced to the merest abridgment, the ignorance, avarice, jealousy, and *odium theologicum* of the four orders of the friars towards each other, cannot be eliminated.

The plot is very simple. A humble Christian has learned his *Pater noster* and his *Ave Maria* "almoste to the end." But his great object is the Creed; and having failed in other quarters, he sets forth in search of the friars, thinking that they, at all events, would be able to teach him. The first he encounters is a Minorite; and having asked the friar if he should apply to the Carmelites, receives such an account of that order as would prevent any prudent man from letting one of them into his house, much more trusting his salvation to them. The seeker then applies to the Dominicans (Black Friars, or preachers), to inquire touching the Austins. He wanders through their "house," describing minutely its palatial splendours, and learns from a burly over-fleshed friar, capitally painted, that any brother of the Austins is worse than worthless.

"He holdeth his ordynauce
With hores and theves."

The next application regards the Minorites, or Gray Friars. It is made to the Augustins (Austyns), the site of whose London house is still pointed out in Austin Friars. The brother the seeker addresses is

"Almost madde in mynde,
To see how these minours
Many men bygyleth—"

How avaricious, how gluttonous, how hypocritical they are, and how they break the rules of their founder St. Francis! As little edified by the Augustin's praises of his own order as by his attack upon others, the simple seeker after his Creed quits him, and peeping into a tavern spies a couple of Carmelites, or White Friars. Them he questions with the same success as attended his other queries. The Dominicans, whom he now inquires about, are described as "so dique (worthy) as the Devil, that dropped from heaven." But though none of them can teach him his Creed, they offer to assoil him, and take his sins upon themselves, if he will pay them. Disgusted by all he has met with, the searcher departs. As he wanders on his way, he falls in with a poor ploughman and his family. The poverty is probably exaggerated; for the ploughman of those days was a small tenant-farmer, not a mere labourer, though called so in the statute. But be this as it may, it is a curious photograph of a rustic family at work, circa 1390.

"Thanne turnede I me forth,
 And talked to myselfe
 Of the falshe of this folke,
 Whow feythles thei weren (were).
 And as I wente by the way
 Wepyng for sorowe,
 I seigh (saw) a sely (simple) man me by,
 Upon the plough hongen.
 His cote was of a cloute
 That cary* was y-called;
 His hod (hood) was ful of holes,
 And his heare (hair) oute;
 With his knoppede shon (shoes full of knobs)
 Clouted (patched) ful thykke;
 His ton toteden (toes peeped) out,
 As he the lond tredede (trod);
 His hosen over-hongen his hokshynest†
 On everich a syde,
 Al beslomered in fen (mire),
 As he the plow folwede (plough followed).
 Tweye myteynes (gloves) as meter (not known)
 Maad al of cloutes,
 The fyngres weren for-ward (worn out),
 And ful of fen (mire) honged (hung).
 This whit (man) waselede in the feent‡
 Almost to the ancle;
 Foure rotheren (oxen) hym byforne,
 That feble were worthi (become);
 Men myghte rekenen ich a ryb (each rib),
 So rentful (miserable) they weren.
 His wiif walked hym with,

* A coarse cloth.

† His hose overhung his shins above the ancle.

‡ Sunk in the mire.

With a long gode,
 In a cuttede cote,
 Cutted fulheyghe (*i.e.* a cloak cut scanty),
 Wrapped in a wynwe shete (winnowing sheet)
 To weren hire fro wederes (plural of weather),
 Bar-fot on the bare iis,
 That the blod folwede.
 And at the londes ende lath (lay)
 A little crom-bolle (crumbowl),
 And theron lay a lytel chylde
 Lapped in cloutes,
 And tweyne of tweie yeres olde
 Opon another syde.
 And al they songen o songe,
 That sorwe (sorrow) was to heren (hear);
 They crieden (cried) alle o cry,
 A kareful note (note full of care).
 The sely man sighed sore,
 And seyde, 'Children, beth stille!'" pp. 475-477.

This ploughman of course is Piers. Mistaking the cause of the wayfarer's sorrows, he proffers "such good as God has sent." When he learns the real cause of the weeper's grief, he confirms his opinion of the friars in a diatribe against the whole body, and then teaches the pilgrim the Apostles' Creed. The poem concludes with a brief hortative and prayer.

It seems probable that some exaggeration may exist in these pictures of the ignorance of the friars; for they are constantly painted as very active in their vocation of mendicants, and possessed of many popular arts. If true, the simplest resolution of the problem would seem to be, that Christianity was really so corrupted by the Romish Church that the Gospels, and even the Creed, were abandoned for legends, lives of saints, and matter even more superstitious. One thing, however, is clear: these representations must have chimed in with the popular belief, and been generally true, if erroneous or exaggerated in some particulars. Had the "Vision" and the "Creed," the comic tales of Chaucer, and other works of those times, not been founded on fact, they would have dropped still-born from the penmen, without attaining popularity or permanence; for no genius can render palatable what is believed to be falsehood and slander. And if it be said that the works of Chaucer and of the Monk of Malvern contain a good deal besides attacks on the clergy, such is not the case with the *Creed of Piers Ploughman*, which is a fierce or mocking denunciation of the friars from beginning to end. Yet so effective was the poem in its own period, and so pertinaciously was it pursued by the churchmen, that no manuscript copy is known to exist of an earlier date than the first printed edition.

ART. III.—THE GREAT ARABIAN.

The Life of Mahomet. By W. Muir, B.C.S. London : Smith, Elder, and Co.

WITH these two volumes Mr. Muir has worthily completed a great task. In a review of the former half of the work we commented slightly on its obvious defects, an occasional indifference to sound canons of evidence, and a tendency to overrate the undoubted value of unbroken tradition. But, reading his work as a whole, we are half disposed to retract even those gentle animadversions in our keen appreciation of the duty he has so successfully performed. His book is a distinct addition, if not to human at least to English learning; and the books of which that can be said are so few, that the inclination to criticise, however just, is almost forgotten in the rich pleasure of new and perfected knowledge. Our business in this Number is not with Mr. Muir, but with the great Arabian, whose life he has undertaken to narrate, and we may therefore state at once in what we conceive the special merit of this biography to consist. It is not a history of Mahometanism, or a diatribe against Mahomet, or even an analysis of the special influence Mahomet's opinions have exercised on the world. There are books of that sort enough and to spare, and the effect of them all has been to shroud the life of their hero in that dim cathedral gloom which covers as with a mist the lives of all great religious teachers, and through which their forms and acts are only fitfully apparent. The real life of the man, the successive steps by which he attained power, the influences which produced his opinions, and the circumstances which, if they did not produce *him*, at least allowed full scope for his grand and consecutive action, are lost in a cloud of opinions, till the bewildered Englishman falls back on Gibbon's imperfect but lucid narrative as a relief from the deluge of mere commentary. It is as difficult to extract any notion of Mahomet's actual life from the majority of books about him, as to compile a life of Kant from the libraries written on the Kantian philosophy. Mr. Muir has avoided that gross mistake. His work is a real life, a life as minute, as reasonable, and, with an exception here and there, as impartial, as if Mahomet had been only a king, a great politician, or a successful leader of revolution. The development of the man is shown as much as his full maturity. The slow and painful efforts by which he rose to power in Medina, the almost as slow operations by which he first sub-

duced and then amalgamated the clans of the desert into one mighty and aggressive dominion, are set forth with a patient accuracy, which rather increases than weakens their native dramatic force. The reader sees clearly, without being directly taught, how far Mahomet was indebted to existing circumstances, and how far to his own genius, and discerns for the first time the true influence of that strange *personnel*, slaves and chiefs of clans, relatives and hereditary foes, among whom the prophet had to pass his daily and outer life. He comes to regard Mahomet at last in his true light, as a great man, instead of a mere abstraction, to predict his action in his own mind as a new obstacle reveals itself, to feel something of that glow of personal interest with which a clever boy traces the conquests of Alexander, or exults and desponds with the alternating fortunes of Cortez or Christopher Columbus.

To create such an impression about any man is no mean triumph; but to elicit it of Mahomet is a positive gain to the generation among whom it is produced. In the whole compass of knowledge, looking down all that stately line of figures whose mere names serve as the best landmarks of human history, there is not one whose life better deserves to be known, to become, as some of Shakespeare's characters have become, an integral part of thought rather than a subject for thought, than that of the great Arabian. That a man's opinions should circulate widely, survive himself, and help to modify human action for ages after he is forgotten, is, though a wonderful, not an infrequent phenomenon. That a man obscure in all but birth, brought up among an unlettered race, with no learning and no material resources, should by sheer force of genius extinguish idolatry through a hundred tribes, unite them into one vast aggressive movement, and, dying, leave to men who were not his children the mastery of the Oriental world,—even this career, however wondrous, is not absolutely unique. But that a man of this kind, living humbly among his equals, should stamp on their minds the conviction that he whom they saw eat, and drink, and sleep, and commit blunders, was the vice-gerent of the Almighty; that his system should survive himself for twelve centuries as a living missionary force;* that it should not merely influence but utterly remould one-fourth of the human race, and that fourth the unchangeable one; that it should after twelve centuries still be so vital that an Asiatic, base to a degree no

* Mahometanism is still widely propagated in India and Africa. In Africa it is marching south, and in India its gains are supposed to counterbalance its losses every where else. In Bengal alone the converts number thousands yearly, and one of the most serious dangers of the government arises from the frantic zeal of the new converts made by the Ferazee Mussulmans.

European can comprehend, should still, if appealed to in the name of Mahomet, start up a hero, fling away life with a glad laugh of exultation, or risk a throne to defend a guest; that after that long period, when its stateliest empires have passed away, and its greatest achievements have been forgotten, it should still be the only force able to hurl Western Asia on the iron civilisation of Europe;—this indeed is a phenomenon men of every creed and generation will at least be wise to consider. What this Mahomet was, and what he did, is a question the masters of the second Mahometan kingdom may well think as important as Pompey's intrigues or Diocletian's policy, and it is this which Mr. Muir has enabled them for the first time fully to comprehend. There is much to be told besides, and libraries will yet be exhausted in the description of all the effects which this man's life produced on the world; but of the life itself, of the manner of man Mahomet was, of the deeds he really did, and of the things he can be proved to have said, no man who can read Mr. Muir's book need henceforward remain ignorant. We shall, we believe, best serve our readers if we reduce for them, into a few pages, some idea of the life of the great man who is here presented. Our object in so doing, like Mr. Muir's, will not be to analyse opinions, except so far as they are indispensable to a true comprehension of his acts, but to give succinctly an accurate account of his career, passing somewhat lightly over the history already well known to Europeans, and depicting more in detail those facts which intervened between his assumption of supernatural knowledge and the complete success of his mission,—an interval of which the popular histories make one unintelligible jumble. Throughout, it is as the great Arabian—the character in which he is not known, and not as the prophet, the character in which he is known—that we intend to consider him.

Mahomet was born at Mecca, in the autumn of the year 570 A.D.; the posthumous son of Abdallah, a younger son of the hereditary chief of the Koreish clan, and therefore of the highest and purest blood possible in Arabia, of the only blood, in fact, in which resided any claim, however slight, to superiority throughout the entire peninsula. Englishmen, deceived by the epithet "camel-driver," so often applied to Mahomet, are accustomed to consider him low-born, and, indeed, so greatly underrate both his own position and that of his country, that it is necessary to expend a few words in showing to what he really was born. Arabia, then, is not what Englishmen habitually conceive it to be, a mere sandy desert, flat as sands generally are, traversed by bands of half-starved horsemen, with two little but sacred cities, and a port which an English frigate can reduce

to reason by a bombardment. It is a vast, though secluded, peninsula, with an area 100,000 square miles greater than that of Europe west of the Vistula,—greater, that is, than the territories of four of the five Powers, with Germany, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Scandinavia, Poland, and Italy added thereto. This enormous region, so far from being a mere sandy plain, is traversed by high ranges of mountains, filled with broad plateaus, many of them as wide as European kingdoms, and full of magnificent, though dreary and awe-inspiring, scenery. The highest Arab tribes—and the point is one too often forgotten—are *mountaineers*; share in the fervid imagination, the brooding and melancholy thought, which have in all ages distinguished men bred on the higher regions of the earth. Even the aridity of the soil of Arabia, though great, is, as a political fact, seriously exaggerated, partly because the districts nearest to civilisation are the worst, partly because travellers select the winter for explorations,—a time when even the fertile plains of Upper India look hideously desolate; but chiefly because the European mind has a difficulty in realising territorial vastness, or comprehending how enormous may be the aggregate of patches of cultivation spread over a peninsula like Arabia. When, some two years ago, the Governor of Aden was permitted to visit Lahej, he, filled like all other Englishmen with the “idea” of Arabia, was startled to find himself, only a few miles from his own crackling cinders, amidst pleasant corn-lands and smiling villages, in which dwelt a population showing every sign of prosperity and content. There are thousands of such spots in Arabia, to which the eternal boundary of the desert blinds all but the keenest observers. In such oases, scattered over the broad plateaus, and down the arid slopes, and amidst the half-watered valleys, dwelt, in the time of Mahomet, a series of clans, divided politically as much as the modern nations of Europe. What the aggregate of their numbers may have been is a point which for ages to come must remain uncertain. Orientals object to counting, and similes derived from the stars and the sands by the sea-shore satisfy only the imagination. Burckhardt believed them to be fourteen millions; and, tried by the only test observers can apply, that number is within the truth. It is nearly certain, that at one time during the second great outflow to conquer the world, Arabia had more than a million and a half of her children scattered over Western Asia and the shores of the Mediterranean. They colonised wherever they conquered; and from Syria to Tetuan, through a belt of country a thousand miles in depth, the basis of the population is still Arabian. It may be affirmed safely, that no race that ever existed ever sent ten per cent of its resident popula-

tion to battle at once. The convention, when France was in its death-grapple with all Europe, never mustered, on paper, more than a million of men round her standards, or four per cent of her population. Allowing for the impulse of poverty as stronger in Arabia than in France, we cannot set the population of the peninsula at less than fifteen millions, while it is more than probable that it greatly exceeded that number. This population dwelt, when it could, in fenced cities and strong defensible villages, a section only living in tents and the desert. The clans fought, and negotiated for plunder or territory; but their wars, though constant and bloody, were not internecine, and it was an understood rule that conquerors should not injure property more than they could help, fill wells, or cut down palm-trees. They had, moreover, some strong bonds of national cohesion. The tribes all spoke one tongue. The great majority either were, or fancied themselves to be, of one blood. They had one form of worship,—a cult, not a creed,—which compelled them to regard Mecca as sacred, and the Koreish, as the guardians of the sacred territory, as the highest among mankind. Above all, they had but one character and one social system. They were not divided by the democratic idea and the aristocratic idea, by religious feeling or sceptical feeling, by an antagonism of races or a conflict of classes. Every Arab was, in essentials, like every other: full of poetry and sentiment, with the greediness which, among poverty-stricken races, is a passion; with a knowledge of traditional history, and consequently an ingrained reverence for pedigree; brave, accustomed to arms, and carrying the point of honour—revenge for insult or injury to the clan—almost to ferocity. All united, too, in the *moral* necessity of maintaining the neutrality of Mecca, and in respecting the blood of Maadd, the chieftain who, just one thousand years before, had rebuilt the power of a house which stretched back straight to Ishmael, and dying, left Mecca to the descendants whom the Arabs call the Koreish.

Mahomet, therefore, as the son of Abdallah, son of Abdul Mutalik, chief of the clan Koreish, was simply a cadet of the highest aristocracy in a land of aristocrats, a man of the only tribe from which princes could be expected to come; a man at least as well born as the descendants of any house in Europe not actually on a throne. Poverty, it must be remembered, does not in Asia affect pedigree. A Brahmin begging is greater than a Sudra reigning; and, though born poor himself, Mahomet stood from his birth armoured in wealthy relatives and highly-placed kinsmen. The child was born after his father's death, and, according to a custom still prevalent in Arabia among the population of the cities, was sent at once into the

desert to breathe a freer air, and lived for five years with a wandering tribe called by the Arabs the Sons of Saad. In the fifth year, Halima, his foster-mother, though fond of the child, was frightened by some symptoms of epilepsy, and restored him to his mother Amina; but Mahomet never forgot the kindness he had received. Thirty years afterwards, when he had become comparatively wealthy, he raised Halima from her poverty, and, after the lapse of half a century, the appeal of his foster-father instantly sufficed to release his clan, while his adopted relatives were offered wealth and position at their will. The only recorded incident of his childhood, apart from legends, was a visit to Medina with his mother; a visit which stamped itself so strongly on his memory, that at fifty he remembered every detail. On her return she died, leaving Mahomet, still a child, to the care of his grandfather, Abdul Mutalik. He speedily followed, and all power in Mecca passed to another branch of the Koreish, and away from his own immediate connexions. A wealthy and powerful uncle, however, Abu Talib, took charge of the boy, and became so attached to him that, after a life passed in struggles on his behalf, his last words were a prayer to his kinsmen to protect his nephew. With this uncle he made a journey into Syria, then a nominally Christian country, and took some part in a feud called the Sacrilegious War, because it began in the holy month, and violated, in the end, the sacred territory. Every year, too, he was present at the annual fair attended by Christians from Syria, Jews from the neighbourhood, and representatives of all the tribes of Arabia; and listened, as he tells us in the Koran, to the eloquent preaching of the Syrian Bishop Koss, and to the orators of the tribes as they contended with each other for the palm of eloquence. He was present also at a scene which, if he had not himself proscribed all art, his followers in after ages would have loved to paint. Owing to the absence of any central authority, Mecca was full of disorder, and the heads of four sub-clans of the Koreish, tired of the misery before them, met together at night, with Mahomet in their midst, and swore "by the avenging Deity to take the part of the oppressed, and see his claim fulfilled so long as a drop of water remained in the ocean, or to satisfy the claim from their own resources." Mahomet in after life declared, that he would not lose the recollection of having been present when that oath was taken for the choicest camel in all Arabia. Though thus admitted to council in right of his birth, his daily work was that of a shepherd, an office then deemed honourable, and, by his own account, he was singularly free from vice of every kind. The silent, lonely life must have done much to strengthen a mind naturally tender, and increase

that habit of brooding thought to which he was addicted through life, and for which he had presently an ampler opportunity.

Mahomet was twenty-five years old before any change took place in his career; and there is no reason to believe that his opinions were in the smallest degree in advance of those entertained by the same class of his countrymen. He was then asked by his uncle to take charge of a caravan, which Khadijah, a wealthy widow of their house, was about to despatch to Syria. He accepted the office, and travelled to Bostra, a place about sixty miles beyond the Jordan, whence he returned without adventure, and with a fair but moderate profit of cent per cent on the caravan. None of this profit was for himself; but during the journey he had gained something more valuable than his salary. That royal sweetness of nature which from boyhood distinguished Mahomet had so impressed a slave attached to the caravan, that, on his return, he besought his leader to present himself to the widow, with the tidings of his successful merchandise. The slave himself never tired of sounding the praises of the handsome agent, and Khadijah, a comely widow, fell deeply in love with him. She is said by Arabs to have been forty; but as she subsequently bore him six children, her age has been probably exaggerated. She gained her father's consent while he was tipsy, and offered Mahomet marriage, and his instant acceptance raised him at once to a place among the wealthy men of the city. The union was a happy one for thirty years. Khadijah left him entirely to his meditations, relieving him of all cares of business; and Mahomet, giving full swing to his natural temperament, wandered incessantly among the mountains which overlook Mecca, feeding his heart with reverie. None but those who have lived long among Asiatics can understand how an Oriental mind can brood over an idea. It is perhaps the most marked distinction between him and the Western man: the European thinks, the Oriental only reflects, and if left to himself the idea, turned over and over endlessly in his mind, hardens into the consistency of steel. Thenceforward it is part of the fibre of his mind, something on which argument is lost, on which he at all times, and in all circumstances, bases immediate action. Mahomet had not, as the popular histories aver, given himself up to inquiries into Christianity and Judaism, nor is there any evidence that he ever talked with a Christian monk named Sergius or Nestorius, nor had he ever been taught by a follower of the Jewish Scripture; but he had from his earliest days been surrounded by the Jewish tribes settled in Arabia, and had learnt vaguely and imperfectly their more imaginative traditions, derived, it would seem, from the source whence Josephus derived *his* antiquities. We conjecture this

from the frequent recurrence of names which exist in Josephus's account, and not in the Law he professed to follow. He had also talked with Christian slaves, particularly an acute Greek, who became a disciple; and his mind brooded over the possibility of reconciling these creeds with the Pagan cult of Arabia. Gradually, perhaps very early, a horror of idol-worship arose in his mind, a belief in one true, impersonal, and absolute Deity, so strong and vivid as to colour his entire future life. How long his faith was in development, he has not informed us; but, once developed, it took entire possession of his mind. Brooding for months in solitude on the tops of the Hira range, he gradually obtained that ecstatic conviction, which in better creeds their followers term conversion, and with that conviction came the impression that it had been given for a purpose; that he had been selected to become the Messenger of the Most High, to preach the unity of the Godhead unto all mankind. Thenceforward he esteemed himself a specially chosen instrument, one whose reveries were revelations; and throughout his further life, under the most extreme temptation, and in the darkest adversity, Mahomet never for a moment swerved from his central belief: "God is the God: I am the Sent of God." When, years after, he lay hidden in a cave, with the footsteps of his pursuers sounding overhead, and Abu Bekr his only companion, he cheered his friend with the calm assurance, that though they were but two, God was the third. When a great tribe offered to follow him, and give him the sway of a third of Arabia, if he would leave to its chief some section of authority, he calmly answered, "Not one green date." How *could* authority be shared with the Messenger of the Most High? This, and not the doctrine of conversion by the sword, was what he announced to his household; and it is perhaps the most marvellous fact in his history, that the three nearest to him, nearer than any valet ever was to his master, accepted his assurance of divine commission. Khadijah his wife, Ali his nephew, and Zeid his freedman, believed in his mission, treasured up the bursts of mystic poetry in which his first convictions were expressed, and after twenty years of suffering, protracted through every conceivable variety of disaster, remained steadfast in the faith that this man was verily sent of God.

It was in the forty-fourth year of his age (A.D. 614) that Mahomet first announced to the sneering Meccans that God had elected him Prophet of a Faith, which as its first step involved their secular ruin. *Their* importance depended on their character as hereditary guardians of Ozza and Lat, the two idols of the sacred shrine. If idolatry were a crime their office ended, and with it their rank in Arabia, the rich tribute of the tribes, the gains of the central mart, and the incalculable advantage

of the one city which no Arab dared attack. In exchange for this they were offered an idea; for the elevation of Mecca was not Mahomet's original intention—he rather leaned to Jerusalem. They sneered carelessly, for Mahomet was too strongly protected to be attacked, but they rejected him without any very great excitement or attention. Some few, however, chiefly among his own connexions, confided in him, ignorant that many, in accepting his statements, accepted also thrones and places in the front rank of human history. Abu Bekr, a chief of the Bani Saym, a sub-tribe of the Koreish, listened to the new revelation gladly, and lived and died—refugee, soldier, vizier, and caliph—always the bosom friend and believing disciple of his kinsman. Saad, the next disciple, was a nephew of Mahomet's mother, Amina; Zoheir, the next, a nephew of Khadijah; Othman, the next, a grandson of Abdul Mutalik, Mahomet's grandfather; and Abdul Ruhaman, the fifth, was of the Bani Zohra, Amina's clan. Numerous slaves also announced their adhesion to the new opinions. Abu Bekr exhausted great wealth for an Arab in purchasing slaves who had been persecuted for their admiration of Mahomet, and from that day to this Islam has been distinguished by its adherence to one high principle. The slave who embraces Islam is free; not simply a freed man, but a free citizen, the equal of all save the Sultan, competent *de facto* as well as *de jure* to all and every office in the state. The total number was few, not five score; but after four years of preaching it had become sufficient to arouse discontent and enmity. The Koreish dared not attack Mahomet himself, for he was protected by his relatives; but they jeered at him, and threatened the disciples, who one by one dropped into the little house where he preached, still called the House of Islam, and took the oath of allegiance to the one God and his Messenger. So fierce became the persecution, that Mahomet sent some of his followers to Abyssinia, and even tried by a momentary concession to idolatry to gain them protection from assault. The Meccans heard with delight that he had named Ozza and Lat, the two great idols, as intercessors before the Throne; but the weakness lasted only a few days, and the storm, intensified by disappointment, raged more violently than ever. His uncle, Abu Talib, was compelled to threaten all who should attack him with death; and when, in the sixth year of his preaching, two powerful citizens, Omar and Hamza, professed themselves disciples, even *his* influence could not restrain the Koreish from proceeding to extremities. They solemnly placed all the descendants of Hashim, Mahomet's great-grandfather, under the ban, refused to intermarry with them, or trade with them, or supply them with food, and drove them *en masse* into the quartier occupied by the relatives and descend-

ants of Abu Talib. There they were cut off from the city, none venturing to sell them any thing except by stealth, and none of them daring to go out except during the holy month, when Mecca was a sanctuary to all Arabs. In this imprisonment the Prophet and his followers remained three years, until his enemies, wearied out, accepted the accidental destruction of the paper on which the ban was written as a sign that God willed the interdict to be lifted. The release, however, was followed by the deaths of Khadijah and Abu Talib, and at the end of the tenth year of his ministry Mahomet found himself with his means diminished, his band of followers not increased, his protector dead, and the Koreish at last apparently at liberty to extirpate his disciples. In this extremity he resolved on an enterprise which, we agree with Mr. Muir, would alone suffice to prove his own belief in his mission. Followed only by Zeid, he set out for Tayif, a city sixty or seventy miles from Mecca, inhabited by Pagans of a peculiarly bigoted character, and boldly appealed to its people for aid, protection, and belief. They stoned him out of the city, and he returned to Mecca wounded and defeated, calmly repeating to himself, "Thy anger, O Lord, alone I dread." The Koreish were exulting in the certainty of victory, when aid suddenly appeared in another quarter.

In the season of pilgrimage, A.D. 620, Mahomet, who always preached to the crowds which at that season gathered from all parts of Mecca, had attracted the regard of a few pilgrims from the rival though inferior city of Medina. The Jews were powerful in Medina, and the idolaters there had gathered from them a vague idea that a mighty prophet was at hand, whom it was advisable for the idolaters speedily to conciliate. Five or six of them took Mahomet to be the prophet expected, and they promised on the next pilgrimage to bring him more of their brethren. Time is nothing in the East, where nothing ever occurs; but that year must have been a weary one to the prophet and his followers. It passed away, however, and at the next pilgrimage the number of the Medinese was doubled, and twelve converts took the oath of allegiance to Mahomet. Again they were sent home, and again Mahomet, with the stolid patience which in Europe belongs only to the greatest, and in Asia to every body, waited through the year in peace. He even intermitted preaching, keeping his followers in heart by occasional revelations, and confirming his own authority by the distinct announcement, "Whoso obeyeth not God and his prophet, verily to him shall be the fire of hell,"—a declaration almost superb in its pride when the circumstances are considered. The men who were to obey it were his own kinsmen, men who had known him from his youth up, who lived with

him almost in imprisonment in Abu Talib's quartier, among whom he ate and slept, and had begun to marry wives, to whom his demeanour in every hour of the day was thoroughly known. Twelve years of Mahomet's preaching, eight of their fidelity, had brought them nothing except injury to their substance, and the hatred of their relatives; they had no conceivable chance of earthly power, and most of them little chance of escaping the Koreish. Yet here, in the midst of their tribulation, while still sick with longing for aid from a distant and inferior city, Mahomet asserted authority without limit or bound, and was cheerfully, even eagerly, obeyed. The year passed at last, and this time a numerous band, seventy-three men in all, met him from Medina, and in the dead of night, in the stony valley of Akaba, swore to obey Mahomet, and protect him with their lives. Great precautions had been taken to insure secrecy; but the Koreish heard of the meeting, and pursued the retiring Medinese. They returned, however, from a fruitless expedition, and in a few days Mahomet gave the command, "Depart unto Medina."

Secretly, by twos and threes, his disciples left the city; and as house after house was deserted, and quartier after quartier became vacant, the Koreish looked on with amaze. Themselves an aristocracy, they could not comprehend the faith which induced wealthy men of high blood to go forth penniless to a distant and usually hostile city, 250 miles away, at the bidding of one no greater than themselves. Mahomet stayed to the last; and it was not till a rumour reached him that the Koreish had resolved on his death, that he and his faithful Abu Bekr fled from Mecca. Fearful of pursuit, they ascended the mountain Thaur, and there lived three days, hunted by the Koreish, who at one time passed over the cave in which they lay concealed, and fed by a shepherd formerly in Abu Bekr's employ. On the third night, the 20th June 622, the Prophet commenced his ride, and reached Medina in safety with his friend. His family, and that of Abu Bekr, remained in Mecca, protected by the strong clans to which they belonged, until they also set out for Medina, and the Hegira—the Flight, from which one-fourth of the population of earth compute time—was at last complete. Eight years of public preaching and teaching the unity of God had ended in this, the flight of the Prophet from the city in which his ancestors reigned, with the loss of his patrimony and that of his scanty following.

The points on which this narrative differs from those commonly circulated will be at once perceived. The legendary element is in the first place entirely struck out. The miraculous light which shone from Amina, the long conversations with

Nestorius, the spider's web woven across the entrance of the cave on Mount Thaur, and a hundred stories of like character, which only distract attention from the true facts of his career, are entirely omitted. On the other hand, the element of *time*, which figures so strongly in real life, and has so little influence on fiction, is once more restored to its legitimate place. Mahomet was for three years assured of his own mission before he ventured to preach, and four before he had made a convert beyond Khadijah, Ali, and Zeid. He was six years striving in vain to convince the citizens of Mecca before he made any offer to the men of Medina, and then he waited two more to organise their assistance, and fled at last rather for the sake of his followers and his faith than for his own. His own life was probably in no especial danger. Had he been put to death, all the sons of Abdul Mutalik, and all the descendants of Hashim, all the relations of Khadijah, and all the kinsmen of Abu Bekr, four strong houses out of the ruling clan, would have pursued the murderers to the destruction of themselves and their kinsmen. A sense of this danger was never wholly absent from the minds of the Koreish, who, moreover, always received the slightest concession from Mahomet with undisguised exultation. The real marvel is not in his safety, which was protected by the social system of Mecca, but in the amazing constancy which induced him year after year through the whole maturity of manhood to struggle on, proclaiming his divine mission, preaching the unity of God, and demanding obedience to his prophets, confirming the faith of his followers, strengthening the weak, speaking kindly to the few backsliders, every day building up a dominion over their hearts which, in all the changes of his career, never grew feeble, which induced them, as we shall see, to pour out their lives like water, and, most wonderful of all, compelled them after his death to sacrifice themselves in defence of the truth of his pretensions. To suppose that such influence was ever wielded by a man who did not believe in himself, is to us an absurd stretch of credulity, and his personal power indicates at once the character Mahomet must have borne. Authority of that kind is given only to one class of men, the leader in whom immutable will makes the manner gentle and the speech kindly, while it confers also that grave dignity and that consistent habit of thought before which the mass of men bend as easily as clay to the potter. And this we find to have been the character universally ascribed to Mahomet. Mr. Muir, who is no apologist, speaks repeatedly of the gentle stateliness which was his first obvious attribute, as it is that of all men whom God intends for princes.

"A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration with

which Mahomet treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say *No*; if unable to reply to a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred to remain silent. . . . He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that *he* was the most favoured guest. When he met any one rejoicing, he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly. Gentle and unbending towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others; and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of every one about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervades all these illustrations of his character."

Ten years of command and self-restraint do not diminish dignity; and Mahomet rode into Medina, in all things fulfilling the highest Oriental ideal of the true king. Tall and spare, and of amazing strength, with his cheek still ruddy, and his beard falling in black waves just streaked with silver to his waist, his manner soft to feminine grace, his eye black, restless, and slightly bloodshot, and his gait that of one who ascends a hill, *i. e.* firm but springing, he must have looked as fit to be a leader of men as any the Arabs had ever seen. Add to these advantages, birth derived from the sacred race, the unhesitating devotion of a small but long-tried band, a widespread fame throughout Arabia, some political popularity in Medina, and a claim to authority men could not even examine, much less question, and we have some idea of the true position of Mahomet as the so-called "powerless fugitive" rode into the city, which had turned out its population in mingled curiosity and awe.

The first half of the life of Mahomet was completed, and also the first half of his religion. Up to this time he preached only a faith, but henceforward he was to pile upon this a cult, a series of observances, and many laws which had no necessary bearing upon religion at all. He merged the prophet in the legislator, and it is as the legislator that in Europe he has been most harshly judged. His creed, as evolved at Mecca, had a majestic simplicity, lost to Europeans in their unconscious confusion between creed and laws. It may be summed up in a dozen lines. Mahometanism, stripped of its accessories, is pure theism, enjoining justice, brotherhood among the faithful, abstinence from breaches of the universal moral law, the sexual law partially excepted, and persistent and regular public prayer. That is the substance of Islam, the only creed essential to Musulman salvation, the only law binding upon the soul. An active Moslem *ought* also to perform his social duties, to obey the Kha-

lif, to defend the faith by arms, to bind himself under some few ceremonial laws. But all the doctors agree that he who observes only the precepts just quoted, as, for example, a cripple, will still be saved; that the remainder are the ornaments of Islam rather than its foundation. The notion of an inevitable fate, of a power before which human effort is powerless, and which is now universal in the Mahometan world, was no idea of the Prophet. He doubtless caused it by the excessive rigour with which he pressed upon his followers the notion of the immediate and incessant application of the divine power to earthly affairs,—a notion which makes the strong Puritan doubly energetic, but inclines the weaker Asiatic to indolent acquiescence,—but it was no theory of the Koran.

Europeans will readily perceive wherein this scheme falls short of perfect religious harmony. As a religion for the soul, Mahometanism is too negative, fails to meet the inherent sense of sin, and entirely omits the great correlative of benevolence, love to God, as a motive to action. By Asiatics, however, who consider that love and obedience are not so much cause and effect as absolutely synonymous, this deficiency is rarely felt; and in all other respects Islam, as a creed, is an enormous advance, not only on all idolatries, but on all systems of purely human origin. It utterly roots out idolatry, and restores the one ever-living God to his true place, if not in the heart at least in the imagination and reverence of mankind. It establishes the principle, not indeed of benevolence towards all God's creatures, but of benevolence towards all who have deserved it by expressing their faith in the one true Deity. It prohibits all the universally recognised crimes save one, makes temperance a religious obligation, and finally releases its followers at once and for ever from the burden of a cult, of a law which made ceremonial observance a source or condition of salvation. Prayer does not become a ceremony because it is fixed for stated times, and the Koran never intended it should degenerate into a form. Other ceremony in Islam there was none, circumcision being nowhere ordained, and only retained by the Moslem in imitation of their Pagan ancestors. It is doubtful whether Mahomet was circumcised himself; and the learned reasons assigned by commentators for Mahomet's adoption of this rite are just so many exercises of mistaken ingenuity.

There remains one other point which in Europe is considered, justly enough, a dogma of Islam,—the duty of extending the faith by force. This, however, formed no part of the doctrine as preached at Mecca. It is very doubtful whether Mahomet had ever thought out his terrible sentence,—the sword is the key of heaven and hell; the dogma which, chiming in as it does with the fierce courage of the bravest of Asiatic races, and

adding to "the triumph and the vanity, the rapture of the strife" the grandeur of moral well-doing, has proved the political safeguard of the Mussulman tribes, urging them onwards perpetually to broader dominion, and enabling them, when defeated, to die fighting in the assured hope of a sensual immortality. It is quite certain that at Mecca Mahomet never issued the command in any distinct form, and that he hoped against hope, for twelve long years, to succeed by the simple massiveness of his doctrine and the eloquence of his own tongue. It was in all probability not till the resort of the Koreish to force made him doubt whether argument would henceforward be even accessible to them, that the thought of compulsion, of arguments addressed to the fears instead of the reason, flashed across his mind. The idea, however, was developed fullgrown, for the Sura which recommended the first war with Mecca promised also paradise to him who fell in arms; and of all the revelations this was the one most eagerly believed. It is to this day the last which a sceptical Mahometan doubts, and it exercises a power over inferior races almost as extraordinary as the sway Christian truth can sometimes obtain. It is related of Tippoo's Hindoo converts, 70,000 of whom were made Mussulmans by force in a single day, that this was the doctrine they accepted with their hearts; and at the siege of Seringapatam they courted death in scores: men utterly lost to every call of honour, or patriotism, or family affection, whose only occupation is eating, and whose only recreation is woman, still thrill with excitement at the summons for the faith, and meet death with a contempt the Red Indian could only envy. In the recent war in Upper India even the Highlanders wavered as the Ghazees flung themselves on their bayonets; and the Moplahs have been known to yell with exultation as the bayonets passed through them far enough to allow their short knives to stab deep. The promulgation of this order marked the completion of a political rather than a religious position. Mahomet could add nothing to his power as prince: no compact with his people, no conceivable subtilty of legislation, no fanaticism of loyalty, could invest him with any thing but a faint shadow of the despotic power which *must* appertain to a recognised vice-gerent of God. But the additional belief that death in war is an instant passport to heaven turned all his followers into willing conscripts, and war into the most solemn and most sacred of ordinary duties. Imagine the Puritan soldiers convinced, not only that their cause was favoured of God, but that Cromwell was his vice-gerent, and that the Day of Judgment could never arrive for the soldier slain in battle, and we gain some idea of the spirit in which the first followers of Mahomet advanced to the conflict with the infidels.

Mahomet arrived in the outskirts of Medina on 28th June, A.D. 622, and after a halt of a few days to ascertain the state of opinion in the town, he entered the city on a Friday,—a day thenceforward set apart for public worship throughout the Moslem world; and throwing the reins on the neck of his camel, Al Caswa, bade her seek her resting-place through the rejoicing crowds. Al Caswa halted in an open courtyard, and Mahomet descended and marked out the site for his first house, and the mosque in which pilgrims to Medina still recall his flight. He did not, of course, though it is often asserted, assume any power over Medina. The dislocated social condition universal throughout Arabia enabled him to exercise the direct and sole sovereignty over his own followers; and their attachment, his own popularity, and the mysterious awe with which he began to be regarded, gave him vast influence over the inhabitants; but of direct authority he had scarcely any. Each tribe governed itself. The two strongest, the Beni Khazraj and the Beni Aws, were passively favourable, but he had frequently to conciliate them, and Abdallah, the chieftain of the first-named clan, regarded him with strong jealousy and disfavour. He would have been prince of Medina but for Mahomet's arrival, and though he remained through life an ally, he pressed his influence arrogantly, and has the honour of being the only man who ever turned Mahomet from a declared purpose. The remaining tribes seem to have been friendly, with the exception of the Jews, who were numerous and powerful, and who gradually became objects of intense dislike to Mahomet. He had once entertained the idea of taking them into his religious system, and he made on his arrival a covenant with one tribe, granting them privileges very similar to those enjoyed in after times by the Jews of Cordova. He soon, however, when in actual contact with them, discovered what so many princes had discovered before, that Judaism cannot by its very nature coalesce with any other creed, and the revelations gradually became hostile to their claims. The Jews fell back entirely; and as Mahomet had not discovered the second truth, that force applied to Jews is waste of power, he assumed a position of open hostility to the tribes.

This, however, is an anticipation. For the first six months after his arrival he busied himself with the organisation of his faith. The practice of lustration was regularly introduced. The daily prayers were reduced to five. The first Kebleh Jerusalem was exchanged for Mecca, thus linking Islam with the ancient Pagan cult instead of Judaism, and the month Ramadhan was selected as the period of annual fasting. The day of fast-breaking was also appointed, and finally Mahomet, in obedience to a dream related by a disciple, bade a Negro slave ascend to the

top of a lofty house, and there cry aloud at the appointed times, "Prayer is better than sleep; prayer is better than sleep." Even Alexander the Great is in Asia an unknown personage by the side of the slave Billal, whose cry to this day summons at the same hours a fourth of the human race to the same devotions. As soon as the mosque was completed Mahomet recommenced his personal teaching, preaching from the top of the steps of a high pulpit, in the modern Protestant style. The religious life of Islam was then complete, and to the day of his death the Prophet added only to what may be called the dogmas of jurisprudence. For nearly two years he continued this course of life, slowly the while building up his personal authority. Abdallah, chief of the Bani Khazraj, was troublesome, and the Jews very sarcastic; but day by day the number of his followers increased. The people came over to his side. Each man as he joined him gave up his ties of tribe and kinsmanship, and bound himself a subject to Mahomet alone. He began, also, to use his followers to arms, organising small expeditions against the Koreish caravans; and although these were at first unsuccessful, they accustomed the faithful to the idea of hostilities with the sacred clan, and to habits of military obedience. In three of these forays he commanded in person, and in three the command passed with the Prophet's white banner to his nominee. This was at first always a Medinese chief, and it was not till the third expedition that he ventured to select a commander solely for devotion to himself, and intrust the white banner to the faithful Zeid. The uniform escape of the Koreish induced Mahomet at length to suspect treachery; and on the seventh expedition, in November 623, he sent a Meccan named Abdallah in command, with sealed instructions. This expedition succeeded, but the success was gained in the holy month, and Mahomet for some days had the booty laid aside. At last he relented, his delay having fully established the principle that the disposal of booty rested with him; and reserving one fifth for his own use, or rather that of the state, he divided the spoil. It was shortly after this success that the series of revelations commenced, declaring war against the infidel a main duty of the faithful; and the rich spoil and the splendid future proved too much for the men of Medina. Thenceforward open opposition within the city disappeared; and when, in January 624, Mahomet once more raised his standard, he was followed by the Medinese as readily as by his own people. He nominated a governor during his absence, as if the city belonged to himself alone; and mustering his force outside the walls, found that it had increased from the eighty refugees to three hundred and five.

His object was to intercept the caravan which, with Abu

Sofian, chief of the Koreish, at its head, was crawling from Syria down the coast of the Red Sea on its way to Mecca. With this view he marched rapidly to Badr, where the Meccan road strikes the great Syrian route; but he had, as usual, been betrayed by some secret friend of the Koreish among the Medinese. Abu Sofian hurried on a swift messenger to Mecca imploring aid, while he himself, leaving the coast-route, struck with his caravan direct for the city, which he reached in safety. The Koreish, however, were weary of Mahomet's audacity, and though still divided among themselves as to his claim of kindred, pushed their army of relief forward to Badr, determined to make a signal example. Mahomet was equally eager, and his followers, when consulted, pledged themselves to follow him to the world's end. Fanaticism had destroyed their remembrance of the ties of kindred, and then prayed openly for the destruction of their relatives. They arrived first upon the field, a sandy valley traversed by a small spring which feeds a series of small cisterns. Mahomet filled them all except the one nearest to the enemy, and bade his followers stand on the defensive, and regard that cistern as their citadel. The Koreish crossed the low hills in front of this position on 13th January 624, and began the action in the true Arabian and Homeric style. Three warriors stepping forward challenged the whole of the faithful, and Mahomet, accepting the challenge, ordered three of his relatives, Ali, Hamza, and Obeida, to stand forward. The combat ended in their favour, and the Mahometans, maddened with excitement, and favoured by the wind, which blew a storm of dust in the faces of the Koreish, charged upon a force three times the number of their own with irresistible effect. The Koreish maintained their reputation; but the Moslem craved death as much as victory, and acts such as are ordinarily only dictated by despair signalled their hope of heaven. Omeir, a lad of sixteen, flung away the dates he was eating with a vow to eat the next in paradise; and Muadz ibn Amr, with his arm cut through at the shoulder, tore off the limb as it hung by the skin, bound the wound, and fought on unmindful. Against men of this temper ordinary courage was unavailing, and the Koreish, abandoning forty-nine bodies and the same number of prisoners, all their animals and all their baggage, fled precipitately on the road to Mecca. Six of the prisoners were executed as avowed enemies of Mahomet or his creed, but the remainder were treated with a kindness they publicly acknowledged, and most of them embraced the faith. Every man in the army had at least two camels out of the spoil, and Mahomet averred boldly that Badr was the visible seal of Islam, a battle won by the immediate interposition of the Almighty on behalf of his Prophet. On his return he

assumed the full authority of a prince over the city : ordered Asma, a Jewess who had published satirical verses against him, to be put to death, slew a Jew guilty of the same offence, and besieged the Bani Cainucaa, a Jewish tribe of Medina, in their own faubourg. The Jews, after a siege of fifteen days, submitted at discretion ; and Mahomet, who held them to be rebels and infidels, at once ordered them to execution. He was compelled, however, to yield to the remonstrance of Abdallah, the chief of the Beni Khazraj, and *patronus* of the Jewish clans, and still too powerful to be safely or irremediably offended. Expedition now followed on expedition. The Beni Suleim and the Beni Ghatafan were successively attacked and plundered ; a roving band of the Koreish, headed by their leader, Abu Sofian, were repulsed ; and at last the annual Meccan caravan, laden with bars of silver for the purchase of goods in Syria, was captured, yielding to every man in the army 800 dirhems, a fortune in a country where a dirhem a day was considered fair pay for the governor of a great city. Every expedition increased the confidence of Mahomet's followers, and developed the habit of obedience, until at length the Prophet's whisper was sufficient sentence of death, and the Moslem exulted in their willingness to slay their own brothers at his command. A central authority thus obeyed doubled the active force of Medina. There alone in Arabia a single man of commanding ability could plan without counsellors, and command without explaining his objects. There too alone in Arabia was at work the strangely vivifying principle which, for want of a better term, we must style equality.

The operation of this principle as one of the many causes which favoured the development of Islam has been too frequently overlooked. Despotisms very often, though not always, produce an imperfect equality. In Russia, for example, though the favour of the Czar can raise a serf into a prince, still the prince has under all other circumstances the advantage over the serf. Under Mahomet, however, there sprang up *ex necessitate rei* a form of democratic equality more absolute than the world has elsewhere seen. Claims of birth and wealth could be of no value in the presence of a master whose favour implied the favour of the Deity. The proudest Arab could not murmur if God chose a slave like Zeid to be leader of armies, and visibly confirmed his choice with the seal of victory. It was a principle also of the new sect that Islam extinguished all relations. The slave, once a Moslem, was free ; the foe, once a Moslem, was dearer than any kinsman ; the pagan, once a Moslem, might preach, if the Prophet bade, to attentive listeners. Mahomet was enabled, therefore, at all times to command the absolute aid of every man of capacity within his ranks. No officers of his

threw up their commissions because they were superseded. If he selected a child, what then?—could not God give victory to a child? Moreover, all the latent forces which social order restrains were instantly at his disposal. Every strong man, kept down by circumstances, had an instinctive desire to believe in the faith which removed at a stroke every obstacle to a career. To this hour this principle is still of vital importance in all Mahometan countries. A dozen times has a Sultan utterly ruined stooped among his people, found, in a water-carrier, a tobacco-nist, a slave, or a renegade, the required man, raised him in a day to power, and supported him to save the empire. If the snuff-dealer can rule Egypt, why should he not rule Egypt? He is as near to God as any other Mussulman, save only the heir of the Khalifate; and accordingly Mehemet Ali finds birth, trade, and want of education no obstacles in his path. The pariah who in Madras turns Christian is a pariah still; but if he turns Mussulman, the proudest Mussulman noble will, if he rises, give him his daughter, or serve him as a sovereign, without a thought of his descent. Mahomet, like all real kings, knew men when he saw them; gave power to Omar, the man of the blue blood, or Zeid, the slave, indifferently, and found therefore invariably that the special talent he wanted was at his command.

These immense advantages could not, however, preserve Mahomet invariably from disaster. In the middle of January 625, years after he had reached Medina, the Koreish determined once for all to end the quarrel with their dangerous adversary. Summoning all their allies, and devoting all the treasure saved in Abu Sofian's caravan to military purposes, they raised what was then, in Arabia, a formidable force. Neither then nor at any other time were the Arabs exclusively or mainly cavalry. They admired and cherished horses, and most men could ride; but the possession of a horse was a sign of wealth, and among the mountaineers and citizens by no means a common one. The army, therefore, though 3000 in number, comprised only 200 horse, and its principal reliance was on 700 footmen equipped in mail, and in the archers, who did duty, as in feudal Europe, for light troops. Mahomet, though at first inclined to stand on the defensive, yielded to the ardour of his younger followers, and marched out of Medina with a force which victory, conversions, and new hope had swelled from the 300 of Badr to 1000 strong. Of this force, however, 300, commanded by Abdallah, chief of the Bani Khazraj, indignant at Mahomet's hostility to the Jews, deserted and returned to Mecca; the remainder, though not a fourth of their enemies in number, determined to give them battle, and accordingly took up their position on a small stony plain, above which rose arid and red the frowning

rocks of the mountain Ohod. The battle began, as usual, in a series of single combats, in which, of course, those who believed death only an entrance to paradise had signally the advantage. Excited by perpetual small successes, and perhaps rendered imprudent by their confident hope of divine aid, the Mussulmans pressed on too rapidly, pierced the enemy's line, and began plundering the baggage. The rear-guard joined in this exciting game, and the Koreish horse, seeing their opportunity, swept down on the Moslem from behind. There was a panic, a mad flight, and a rally round the person of the Prophet. Mahomet was felled to the ground, and for a few minutes the course of history was doubtful; but his personal friends protected his body, raised him, and with the broken army made for the rocks and defiles of Ohod. The victors approached, and taunted their defeated enemies; but a charge *up* the rocks, in the teeth of Moslem soldiers, was beyond their courage, and they retired slowly to their own city. The Moslem also returned to Medina, to find every element of disaffection at full work. Seventy-four of the army had fallen, and every man was in an Arab tribe known and classed like an English noble. The charm of invincibility which attached to the Prophet was shattered, the Jews were sarcastic, and the Medinese openly murmured that if Badr were the seal of Islam, Ohod showed the visible wrath of the Almighty. The refugees, however, had seen worse days than these. The Prophet stood, as usual in disaster, firm and gentle. He passed over Abdallah's desertion, ordered a mock pursuit of the Koreish, which gave the talkers something to discuss, and, in a thundering Sura, comforted the faithful, and threatened the wrath of God on the disaffected. "Who am I," he said, "that I should not be defeated?"

"Mahomet is no more than an Apostle, as other Apostles that have gone before him. What! if he were to die or be killed, must ye needs turn back upon your heels? He that turneth back upon his heels injureth not God in the least degree; but God will reward the thankful.

'Furthermore, no soul dieth but by the permission of God, as it is written and predestined. . . .

'How many prophets have fought against those that had multitudes on their side. And they were not cast down at that which befell them fighting in the way of God, neither did they become weak, nor make themselves abject; and God loveth the persevering.'

The magic eloquence of the leader completed the work; and never was Mahomet stronger with his followers than a month after the defeat of Ohod.

The remainder of the year (625) passed in expeditions of various issue. The Beni Asad, a powerful clan who were con-

nected with the Koreish, and raised the standard against Medina, were plundered and dispersed; but on the other hand, seventy Moslem were decoyed by the Beni Aamir into their hands, under pretext of desiring teachers for the faith, and treacherously put to death. The Beni Nadhir, a Jewish tribe, were driven from their possessions, and their estates divided among the refugees, who thus rose into instant affluence. With 1500 men Mahomet maintained his camp for eight days at Badr, waiting attack from the Arab world; and next year he advanced by a march of more than a month along the border of Syria. The Beni Mustalick had, it would seem, menaced him; but the tribe was surrounded, and the prisoners, after a short hesitation, embraced the creed of Medina. These petty expeditions were, however, only the preparations for a new danger.

The Koreish could neither forgive Mahomet, nor escape the idea that he was to them an imminent and ever-pressing peril. They resolved on an effort which gives a high idea at once of their strength and weakness. Summoning all their allies, they advanced, in February 627, on Medina, and besieged it with an army of 10,000 men. Such a force menaced the city with destruction, but its hour had not arrived. Mahomet had in his ranks a man who knew something of Roman fortification, and when the Meccans arrived under the walls they found themselves confronted by a deep ditch. They exclaimed loudly against the cowardice of the device, but they could not pass the ditch, and fell back on stratagem. They made an agreement with the strongest Jewish tribe left in the city, the Koreitza, to attack Mahomet from behind, while they themselves essayed to pass the trench. Mahomet, however, discovered the plot, and by a clever device—which Mr. Muir must pardon us for saying is quite within allowable military expedients, and was imitated by Major Edwardes with effect at the siege of Mooltan—he contrived to make each party think the other was watching to betray them. The grand attack therefore failed ignominiously; a few Koreish only leaping the trench, to be speared without mercy. An Arab army had no commissariat. Provisions ran short, the weather was wretched, and at last, after fifteen days of the siege, Abu Sofian, irritated to madness by personal discomfort, leaped on his horse, and rode away to Mecca. The great army melted away, and Mahomet turned on his domestic foes. He besieged the Koreitza in their faubourg, and after a brief resistance they surrendered at discretion. The Beni Aws begged hard for their lives as old allies, and Mahomet promised the doom of the Jews should be fixed by a man of the allied clan. He selected Sad ibn Muadz, who accepted the office, and took an oath from the people to stand by his de-

cision. To the dismay of his kinsmen, rearing his mighty figure above the crowd, he pronounced the awful sentence—the men to death, the women to slavery; and the doom was accepted by Mahomet. The Koreitza, eight hundred in number, were slain in batches, and the bodies buried, while the women were carried away. “Islam has cut all ties,” was the stern comment of the allies of the murdered tribe. This was the worst deed ever sanctioned by Mahomet, but there is a word to be said in his defence. He undoubtedly regarded these men as traitors as well as rebels, and there is not the slightest evidence that the Koreitza, even by European codes, had not deserved their doom. They had plotted against their own allies on the battlefield, and there is no European general who would not have pronounced them worthy of death, however strongly the modern respect for life might have modified his actual sentence. In this affair, as in the execution of one or two private individuals, Mahomet acted simply as an Oriental prince, neither better nor worse; and we shall presently see how little personal enmity ever influenced his decisions.

The fifth year of the Hegira, A.D. 627, passed away in comparative tranquillity. Mahomet still seemed far from his aim—the mastery of Arabia; but his expeditions continued, and every foray brought him wealth, disciples, and increase of reputation. In one of these raids, his men punished some prisoners guilty of treachery in a manner so barbarous, that Mahomet published a revelation making death by the sword, cord, or crucifixion, the only capital punishments a Moslem could lawfully inflict. The mutilation of the hand was alone retained for larceny, a punishment certainly cruel; but not so especially cruel in relation to the crime as Europeans will be apt to believe. All Asiatics hold larceny a crime only second to murder. Englishmen of the educated class, rich in all necessities, and habitually careless, cannot even conceive the irritation the practice of small theft creates in a poverty-stricken community, to whom every thing is valuable, and by whom every thing is remembered. They will not endure it; and to this day the first charge of a native of India against the British Government is its leniency to larceny, and the second most frequent cause of murder is the determination of the people to punish theft with corporal chastisement carried to an extreme. Mr. Muir rightly condemns mutilation; but when he styles the law one which reflects discredit on Mahomet, he should remember that it is not thirty years since English bankers clamoured for the retention of death as the only true punishment for forgery.

In the sixth year of the Flight, A.D. 628, Mahomet determined to bring himself once more in contact with the represen-

tatives of all Arabia, by attending the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. He started with a powerful force, hoping, apparently, that the Meccans would be too jealous for the prerogative of their city to refuse entrance even to him. He was disappointed, and in his anxiety to be once more enabled to visit the city he so greatly loved, he signed a treaty of amity with his determined foes. Under its provisions, which were to be valid for ten years, all Arabs who chose were to join him without opposition from the Koreish, and all Moslem who chose were to abandon him without punishment. The Meccans, moreover, were to give the shrine up to his followers for three days in every year. Entrance for that year was, however, refused, and Mahomet returned to send ambassadors abroad to four of the sovereigns whose reputation had reached Arabia. Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium, then in the full tide of victory over Chosroes, received the summons to embrace Islam and obey the Prophet in a plainly worded letter, which, of course, he laid aside; Siroes, King of Persia, tore up his missive, provoking from Mahomet the exclamation, that his kingdom should be similarly torn in pieces; Mukoukas, the Roman, or rather Greek, Governor of Egypt, had a nearer view of the power of his strange correspondent. He answered kindly, and sent to Mahomet a present of two Coptic slave-girls, one of whom, Mary, is the heroine of many a Mussulman legend, and would, had her son Ibrahim lived, have been in all probability regarded to this day as the sainted mother of dynasties. The Prince of Abyssinia alone, it is said, obeyed the missive, and even that solitary concession rests upon no evidence but Mahometan tradition, and Abyssinia remains Christian to this day. The embassies are curious proofs of Mahomet's absolute confidence in his own empire, and as the only positive indications of that vast ambition which the achievements of his successors reflected back upon his character. Every creed claims to be universal; but that Mahomet ever contemplated distinctly the conquest of the world is to our minds more than doubtful. He hoped, perhaps, for Syria, but his distinct policy was limited to Syria, and the first mighty outflow of Arabia upon civilisation was caused by the necessity of finding occupation for the tribes who groaned and fretted under the yoke of his successor.

We must pass more briefly over one or two years studded with incident and adventure, to arrive at the crowning achievement of Mahomet's life. In the same year, A.D. 628, he conquered Kheibar one of the richest valleys in Arabia, occupied by Jews, and divided the lands among his followers. It was a woman of this tribe who, by giving him a poisoned shoulder of mutton, laid, in Mussulman ideas, the foundation of the disease

which afterwards proved mortal. Mahomet, however, was now sixty years old, and it seems clear that he never swallowed any of the poison, which was probably the well-known *datura*, or juice of the hemlock. In the following year, he completed his pledge of visiting Mecca, and the Koreish, tired with contest, adhered to their agreement. For three days he was placed in possession of the shrine, and there for the first time he fulfilled all the rites of Islam in the appointed centre of the faith. He retired on the expiration of the three days; but the appointed hour was drawing near when the labour of a life was to be crowned with the full measure of success. The Prophet was growing old, and had as yet done little which could survive his death. He was master of Medina, it is true, general of a powerful army, suzerain of numerous tribes, and with a reputation which extended wherever the Arab orators contended for eloquence; but he was still only a local notability. The Arabs still looked to Mecca as the pivot on which the politics of the peninsula ought to turn; till Mecca was gained, Arabia as a whole was unsubdued, and the conquest of the sacred city became an object of intense burning desire. He resolved to make a final effort to secure it, and the Koreish gave him a fair opportunity. They allowed an allied sept to harry a small Meccan clan because they adhered to Mahomet, and thus, whether willingly or otherwise, broke the treaty of amity. The injured family, the Beni Khozaa applied to Mahomet for redress, which he promised with a solemn asseveration. He at once raised his standard, and summoning his allies found himself at the head of eight thousand men. With this army he marched suddenly on Mecca, where a great change had apparently occurred. Abu Sofian had either been wearied out, or was aware that resistance was hopeless, while the Koreish may be presumed to have become doubtful of the wisdom of further war. They made no preparations for resistance, and Abu Sofian, who had gone out to reconnoitre, was taken, apparently a willing prisoner, to Mahomet. The scene which followed is probably as true as most historical anecdotes, and is exquisitely illustrative at once of Arab manners and Mahometan legendary style.

“ ‘*Out upon thee, Abu Sofian!*’ cried Mahomet, as the Koreishite chief drew near. ‘*Hast thou not yet discovered that there is no God but the Lord alone?*’ ‘Noble and generous sire! Had there been any God beside, verily he had been of some avail to me.’ ‘*And dost thou not acknowledge that I am the Prophet of the Lord?*’ continued Mahomet. ‘Noble sire! As to this thing there is yet in my heart some hesitancy.’ ‘Woe is thee!’ exclaimed Abbas; ‘it is no time for hesitancy, this. Believe and testify at once the creed of Islam, or else thy head shall be severed from thy body!’ It was, indeed, no time for idle pride

or scruple; and so Abu Sofian, seeing no alternative left to him, repeated the formula of belief in God and in his Prophet. What a moment of exultation it must have been for Mahomet when he saw the great leader of the Koreish a suppliant believer at his feet! 'Haste thee to Mecca!' he said; for he knew well when to show forbearance and generosity. 'Haste thee to the city: no one that taketh refuge in the house of Abu Sofian shall be harmed. And hearken! speak unto the people, that whoever closeth the door of his house, the inmates thereof shall escape.' Abu Sofian hastened to retire. But before he could quit the camp, the forces were already under arms, and were being marshalled in their respective columns. Standing by Abbas, he watched in amazement the various tribes, each defiling, with the banner given to it by Mahomet, into its proper place. One by one, the different clans were pointed out by name, and recognised. 'And what is it that black mass,' asked Abu Sofian, 'with dark mail and shining lances?' 'It is the flower of the chivalry of Mecca and Medina,' replied Abbas; 'the favoured band that guards the person of the Prophet.' 'Truly,' exclaimed the astonished chief, 'this kingdom of thy uncle's is a mighty kingdom.' 'Nay, Abu Sofian, he is more than a king,—he is a mighty Prophet!' 'Yes; thou sayest truly. Now let me go.' 'Away!' said Abbas. 'Speed thee to thy people!'

On the following morning the army divided into four columns, and entered the city on all sides, unopposed except by a few fanatics, who endeavoured on one side to keep up a running and ineffectual fight; and Mahomet stood at last lord of the city from which eight years before he had fled a hunted fugitive. It was still filled with enemies, but the magnitude of his triumph had softened his heart, and he spared all save four, the exceptions being men who had injured or insulted him or his family, and a woman who had circulated satirical verses,—an offence Mahomet never forgave. The effect of this generous conduct was instantly apparent. The Meccans gave in their adhesion in a body, and Mussulman writers record with admiration that among them, when they did at last give way, there were no disaffected. The strength thus added to Mahomet was important, but before using it Mecca was to be cleared of idolatry. The pictures of angels within the shrine had been removed on his first entry, and now Mahomet ordered the idols to be hewn down: Ozza and Lat fell with a terrible crash, and Mahomet, as he stood gazing on the destruction, an old man, with the work of twenty years at last accomplished, must have felt that he had not lived in vain. With Ozza and Lat, though he knew it not, crashed down the whole fabric of Arabian idolatry; and the land, though for twelve hundred years rent with strife, though the tribes whom he bound together have fallen asunder, and all other traditions have revived, has never gone back—never showed the desire to go back—to Pagan worship. That one work, small or

great, terminated then; but to Mahomet it seemed as if too much was still left to do.

Scarcely had Mecca been purified when the Prophet summoned its subject clans, and with an army swelled to 12,000 men set out to subjugate Tayif, the city which had stoned him when, alone and unarmed, he visited it to demand obedience in the name of the Most High to a banished and powerless member of the Koreish. On his road he was met by the Beni Hawazin, the powerful tribe settled round Tayif, and narrowly escaped defeat. The Hawazin charged down a defile, and the army of Islam, taken by surprise, fell into a panic, and commenced a precipitate retreat. Mahomet, however, knew that no army existed in Arabia competent to face his own, and standing firm, he ordered a follower of stentorian lungs to summon the Medinese to his standard. They rallied round him instantly, and the dismayed Mahometans, re-forming behind them, charged upon the Beni Hawazin. The victory was complete, and the Prophet passed on unmolested to Tayif. He failed, however, before the city, chiefly from the Arab impossibility of keeping an army together without commissariat, and he returned to Mecca. The property of the Hawazin was, however, divided, and Mahomet exhausted his personal wealth in enriching his new allies. So lavish were his gifts indeed, that the Medinese murmured, and Mahomet had, for the fiftieth time, to appeal to his rare gift of eloquence to allay their discontent. Readers of Parliamentary debates will perhaps catch in this scene a glimpse of the true orator.

"He then addressed them in these words: 'Ye men of Medina, it hath been reported to me that ye are disconcerted, because I have given unto these chiefs largesses, and have given nothing unto you. Now speak unto me. Did I not come unto you whilst ye were wandering, and the Lord gave you the right Direction?—needy, and he enriched you?—at enmity amongst yourselves, and he hath filled your hearts with love and unity?' He paused for a reply. 'Indeed, it is even as thou sayest,' they answered; 'to the Lord and to his Prophet belong benevolence and grace.' 'Nay, by the Lord!' continued Mahomet, 'but ye might have answered (and answered truly, for I would have verified it myself).—*Thou camest to Medina rejected as an impostor, and we bore witness to thy veracity; thou camest a helpless fugitive, and we assisted thee; an outcast, and we gave thee an asylum; destitute, and we solaced thee.* Why are ye disturbed in mind because of the things of this life, wherewith I have sought to incline the hearts of these men unto Islam, whereas ye are already steadfast in your faith? Are ye not satisfied that others should obtain the flocks and the camels, while ye carry back the Prophet of the Lord unto your homes? No, I will not leave you for ever. If all mankind went one way, and the men of Medina another way, verily I would go the way of the men of Medina.

The Lord be favourable unto them, and bless them, and their sons, and their sons' sons for ever !' At these words all wept till the tears ran down upon their beards ; and they called out with one voice,—‘ Yea, we are well satisfied, O Prophet, with our lot ! ’ ”

Tayif did not escape. A converted chief agreed to keep the inhabitants within their walls ; and tired out by a blockade which seemed endless, the citizens gave way. They asked privilege after privilege,—exemption from obedience, exemption from prayer, the safety of their idols ; but Mahomet could not yield ; and stipulating only for the safety of a hunting-forest, they surrendered themselves into his hands. He was by this time at home in Medina, whence he sent forth his collectors throughout the tribes which acknowledged his rule to collect the tithes. A *new* income-tax of ten per cent would be felt as onerous even in England ; but the collectors were only once resisted, and usually welcomed with acclamation. He, moreover, either from policy or really alarmed, as he alleged, at a rumour that the Greek emperor was about to march on him, ordered a general levy of his followers. His power was not consolidated even in the Hejaz, and many of the Arabs refused to obey. The Medinese, weary with exertion, stayed at home ; but still the gathering proved that the fugitive had become a mighty prince. An army such as had never been seen in Arabia, an army of 20,000 foot and 10,000 cavalry, followed him to the Syrian border, and subdued for him the whole of the Christian or demi-Christian tribes in the North. The Prophet felt that the time was come. All Arabs, save of the faith, were solemnly interdicted from Mecca, and a new revelation declared that the object of Islam was the extirpation of idolatry. Conversions now flowed in fast, and the tenth year of the Hegira was a year of embassies. The “ king ” of Oman surrendered all authority to Mahomet’s lieutenant, Amru. The princes of Yemen, the Himyarte dynasty (the foundations of whose palaces Captain Playfair has just turned up at Aden), accepted the new faith. The Hadhramaut followed the example ; and as each tribe gave way, assessors, armed with the new code, entered their territory, terminated mildly all existing authorities, and bound the district fast to Islam and Mahomet. The great tribe of the Bani Aamir was almost the last to yield ; but it yielded, and in 630 the Prophet, master of Arabia, uttered his final address to the representatives of the peninsula, assembled on pilgrimage at Mecca. Mahomet had lived for twenty years a life which would have hardened the heart and ulcerated the temper of almost any man now living,—a life such as that which in seven years made Frederick of Prussia a malicious despot. But there are natures which trouble does not sear ; and

Mahomet, in this his last address, solemnly proclaimed throughout Arabia a law of universal brotherhood. Though inartistic in form, we do not know in literature a nobler effort of the highest kind of oratory, of the rhetoric which conveys at once guidance and command.

“YE PEOPLE! Hearken to my words; for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you here again.

‘Your Lives and Property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until the end of time.

‘The Lord hath ordained to every man the share of his inheritance: a Testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

‘The child belongeth to the Parent: and the violator of Wedlock shall be stoned.

‘Whoever claimeth falsely another for his father, or another for his master, the curse of God and the Angels, and of all Mankind, shall rest upon him.

‘Ye People! Ye have rights demandable of your Wives, and they have rights demandable of you. Upon them it is incumbent not to violate their conjugal faith nor commit any act of open impropriety;—which things if they do, ye have authority to shut them up in separate apartments and to beat them with stripes, yet not severely. But if they refrain therefrom, clothe them and feed them suitably. And treat your Women well: for they are with you as captives and prisoners; they have not power over any thing as regards themselves. And ye have verily taken them on the security of God: and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.

‘And your slaves! See that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves; and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.

‘Ye People! hearken to my speech and comprehend the same. Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are on the same equality’ (and as he pronounced these words, he raised his arms aloft and placed the forefinger of one hand on the forefinger of the other). ‘Ye are one brotherhood.

‘*Know ye what month this is?—What territory is this?—What day?*’ To each question, the People gave the appropriate answer, viz. ‘The Sacred Month,—the Sacred Territory,—the great day of Pilgrimage.’ After every one of these replies, Mahomet added: ‘*Even thus sacred and inviolable hath God made the Life and the Property of each of you unto the other, until ye meet your Lord.*

‘Let him that is present, tell it unto him that is absent. Haply, he that shall be told, may remember better than he who hath heard it.’”

This was the last public appearance of Mahomet. In the eleventh year of the Flight, while still only sixty-three, he issued orders for a levy to subjugate the Syrian desert, and in-

vested Osama, a lad, but the son of Zeid, with the supreme command; but his hour had arrived. In the beginning of Safar, a deadly fever came upon him, and he announced to the weeping congregation assembled in the mosque at Medina his own approaching decease. The exertion increased the disease, and after four days of suffering, during which the burden of his speech was always of suffering as an expiation for sin, he gradually sank, retaining, however, to the last somewhat of the ancient fire. With a quaint touch of satiric humour, he punished all his wives for giving him physic by making them take it too, and on Monday he even joined in the prayers for his own recovery in the mosque. This, however, was his last effort; and on the 8th June 632, exclaiming at intervals, "The Lord grant me pardon," "Pardon," "The blessed companionship on high," he stretched himself gently, and was dead.

The events which followed his death, the election of Omar, the revolt and subjugation of the Arabs, the pouring out of the tribes to the conquest of the world, the long and marvellous story of the Caliphs,—are better known than those of his own life. Our only remaining duty is to sum up his character, and record his special influence as a legislator. Upon his character as a prince, a leader of men, there will, we imagine, be little controversy. No man in history ever rose to dominion with fewer heavy stains upon his character; none ever exhibited more constancy, or a more serene, unwavering wisdom. In the first test of greatness, wealth of loving friends, none ever approached Mahomet. Alexander had friends of a sort, but Hephæstion was not of the stamp of Abu Bekr, and the majority of heroes have been lonely men. It is as a Prophet only that he will be seriously condemned, and doubtless his prophetic pretensions coloured his whole life. We can but state a strong conviction when we affirm, that a series of minute facts leave no doubt on our mind that Mahomet was from first to last absolutely sincere. He really believed that any strong conviction, even any strong wish, that he entertained was borne in upon him by a power external to himself; and as the first and most memorable of these convictions was faith in God, he believed that power to be God, and himself its Messenger. The mode of expressing his convictions was undoubtedly an invention; but that the basis of his faith in himself was sincere, admits, to our mind, of little question. This strength of conviction extended even to his legislative acts, and we cannot better conclude this brief notice of his career than by a glance at his true position as a legislator. Politically, it is easy to understand his position. Believing himself the Messenger of the Almighty, no position save that of despot was possible to him, and he made on this point no

provision for the future. The Mahometans deduce from his opinions the idea that the Khalif is vice-gerent of God, and of course absolute; but no such theory is laid down in the Koran, and the Wahabees, the strictest of Mussulman sects, acknowledge no such dogma. Its adoption was the accidental result of the movement which followed his death, and which compelled the Arabs to intrust despotic authority to their chief. Mahomet settled nothing as to his successors, and it is therefore only in social questions that his legislation is still operative. And even here we are almost without the means of knowing what were the principles he intended to lay down. The living law of Mahometanism is not to be found in the Koran, but in the commentators,—a set of the most vicious scoundrels who ever disgraced humanity, whose first object seems to have been to relax the plain meaning of the original edicts as far as practicable. The original code is on most points just enough. The law as regards property differs nothing in essentials from that which prevails in Europe. Property is sacred, and is pretty fairly divided among relatives. Life is held in reverence, and theft is prohibited, even with cruelty. Truth is strongly inculcated, and adherence to treaties declared an obligation binding on the conscience. Adultery is punished with death, though that provision is hampered by a curious law of evidence; and reverence for parents is sedulously inculcated. The law in fact, except on one point, differs little from that of the Twelve Tables; but that one has modified all Asiatic society for evil. We must give a few words to an unpleasant topic.

It will be observed that we have said nothing of Mahomet's private life, of which all biographers descant so much,—of his eleven wives and two slave-girls, of the strangely relaxed law of the sexes which he established, and of his own departures even from that loose code. The omission was intended, for we conceive too much has always been made of that point in Mahomet's career. In early life temperate to a marvel for Arabia, he was undoubtedly in his later years a man loving women. We do not say "licentious" advisedly, for though all things good and bad are recorded of Mahomet, we hear of no seduction, no adultery,* no interference with the families of his followers. He was simply a man loving women, and heaping up wives, as if he had been exempted from the law he himself laid down. He probably thought he was, as his followers undoubtedly did, and personally he was no worse than thousands whom modern Europe practically condones. He was no better, but it is mere folly to say that his legislation was exceptionally licentious. What he did as regards his followers, was simply this. He left the question

* Zeinab was given to him, not taken.

exactly as he found it,—did not rise one hairbreadth above the general level of Oriental opinion. That opinion is doubtless an evil one. The true law of chastity, the adherence of one man to one woman as long as they both live, is written in a revelation older than any book,—in the great law which makes the numbers of the sexes equal. That law, however, has never yet reached the Oriental world. It is the fixed opinion of Asiatics that the relation of the sexes is a purely physical one, and not subject to any inherent law at all; modifiable, it is true, by external legislation, but not in itself a subject of necessary and inevitable moral restraint. Mahomet made no attempt to alter that opinion. He fixed a limit to the number of wives, but it was not intended as a moral protection, for he formally assigned all female slaves to the mercy of their masters. He left a monstrous evil without a remedy, and for so doing he is doubtless to be condemned. But that he introduced a new evil is untrue; and badly as the system he sanctioned works, the Mahometans are not more corrupt than the Hindoos, and far less vicious than the Chinese.

ART. IV.—BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Papers relative to the Affairs of British Columbia. Parts I. II. III. Presented to both Houses of Parliament. 1859-60.

Papers relative to the Exploration by the Expedition under Captain Palliser of that Portion of British North America which lies between the Northern Branch of the River Saskatchewan and the Frontier of the United States, and between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains, and thence to the Pacific Ocean. Presented to both Houses of Parliament. 1859-60.

Report of the Columbia Mission. 1860.

Facts and Figures relating to Vancouver's Island and British Columbia. By J. D. Pemberton, Surveyor-General. London, 1860.

A FEW years ago the north-west coast of the Pacific seemed marked out as the latest stage in the long course of American colonisation. Sanguine minds, indeed, there were which looked forward to the eventual settlement of the region beyond the Red River; but even these could hardly have imagined a time when those vast prairies would prove too small for their inhabitants, and send down their surplus population to contest the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains with the fur-trader or the Indian hunter. The gold discoveries of the last three years have given a new aspect to the whole future of British America.

British Columbia, but a short time back the least esteemed, as it is even now the least known, of all our colonial possessions, has started into life as a full-grown settlement, and instead of waiting to receive, generations hence, the contingent overflow of communities not yet in being, it bids fair to give an impulse to the progress of the interior which could never have been looked for in the natural course of events. Advantages and disadvantages of situation alike contribute to this result. Its position, midway on the direct route from Europe to Australia and China, promises a large commercial success, dependent only on the establishment of that quicker communication with the mother country which the neighbourhood of a great and possibly hostile power, and the length of the voyage round Cape Horn, already make essential to the due protection of the infant colony. The scheme of an overland route to connect the Pacific with the Atlantic is now a matter of immediate importance, and when once that is accomplished the settlement of the districts through which it passes must speedily follow. It is, we confess, rather for this reason that we are going to draw our readers' attention to the subject. Our knowledge of the circumstances of British Columbia is still so scanty, that even the merest sketch of its capabilities and prospects must be in a great measure incomplete and unsatisfactory. But without it our view of the condition of the unsettled part of British America would be so incomplete, that we prefer to make the attempt even with the disadvantage of our present scanty materials.

On one point indeed, and that, it may perhaps be said, the one of greatest immediate interest, we have information enough. There is no reason to question either the richness of the gold-deposits, or their wide distribution throughout the entire territory. It is found along the whole course of the two principal rivers, as well as of all their more important tributaries. The size both of the particles and of the deposits increases in proportion to the distance from the sea, and the richest mines are now being worked, more than 500 miles from the mouth of the Fraser, about Fort Alexandria, Fort George, and along the mountain range at the head of the Quesnel River. Gold has been found also, though as yet only in small quantities, in some of the numerous inlets along the coast, and it seems probable that the whole country from the sea to the Rocky Mountains will ultimately prove auriferous. At first, the deposits were supposed only to exist in the "bars," or sandbanks projecting into the beds of the rivers, but the dry "benches" or terraces which run one above another along the sides of the streams, and even the table-lands at some distance from the water, are now found equally productive. This change in the field of labour

has produced a corresponding change in the processes employed. The first miners worked only with "rockers," a machine between a child's cradle and a wheelbarrow, containing a sieve, two blankets, and at the bottom a metal plate with quicksilver. The "pay earth" is thrown into the sieve, and the miner rocks the machine with one hand, while he keeps pouring in water with the other. The sieve stops the stones and earth, the blankets the larger particles of gold, and the quicksilver beneath retains the gold dust. The rocker, however, is very generally giving way to the sluice, in which a much larger quantity of earth can be washed in a given time, while the process itself is far more searching. A sluice will often yield from 16*l.* to 20*l.* a day for each man employed, where a rocker, even in the most successful hands, does not return half that sum. The sluice requires a large supply of water, both to carry away the earth above the gold and to wash the "pay dirt," or black sand, in which the gold is found, and which underlies the former to a depth of from four to twenty feet. The water has often to be brought from a considerable distance, and many joint-stock companies have been formed, by whose enterprise canals have been dug, and wooden aqueducts built, in which it is carried for miles at a cost, in some cases, of several thousand pounds. For the use of the water thus brought, each owner of a mining claim pays 1*l.* a day. Mr. Pemberton estimates the gold produced during the years 1858 and 1859 at 600,000*l.*, and the number of miners employed at 3000; so that their average annual earnings could not be more than 100*l.* Even this sum, small as it appears, when the labour and uncertainty are taken into account, is double what is made on an average in California. And while the actual yield of gold in British Columbia will probably be soon very much larger than it has yet been, the average of individual success will not be raised in proportion. Population will increase, and larger returns will have to be distributed among more claimants. Again, mining is constantly requiring more and more capital. We have seen that already the working of sluices implies a certain outlay for water, so that they are generally in the hands of some small capitalist, who employs five or six labourers; and as time goes on and the surface-gold is gradually worked out, the metal has to be extracted from the solid rock: quartz-crushing comes into use, and brings with it the need for expensive machinery.

The population of the colony is as yet composed almost exclusively of miners, and of that class of merchants who find a livelihood in the supply of their more pressing wants. Towns are beginning to spring up at the chief centres of mining industry, though as yet, with the exception of Langley and New West-

minster, they are nothing more than groups of half a dozen log-houses, most of which are "restaurants," started to supply bacon and flour to the miners. The upset price of land in the towns has been fixed at 20*l.* for a lot measuring 64 feet by 120 feet. At Langley, however, the first town-site surveyed, seven times that sum was given at the first sale for some of the lots; and 342 lots, the whole number sold, fetched 13,000*l.*, or nearly 40*l.* apiece. It must be said, however, that at the time of the sale it was generally believed that Langley would be chosen for the capital, and all purchasers were afterwards allowed the option of exchanging their lots for others at New Westminster. Langley is very well situated for a commercial town: the river is deep in-shore, and affords good anchorage, while the land is elevated, with a dry soil, and free from wood. But its position on the American side of the Fraser, and only a few miles distant from the frontier, was justly considered by the military authorities as forming an insuperable objection to its selection as a capital. A site has accordingly been chosen for New Westminster on the north bank of the river, about ten miles from its mouth. It is raised above the level of the floods to which the marshy banks of the stream lower down are periodically subject; there is an ample supply of low-lying land, available for docks, quays, and warehouses. The military advantages of the position are described by Colonel Moody, the Lieutenant-Governor, as very remarkable. In front is the river Fraser, which is here broader and deeper than the Thames at London Bridge. The opposite bank is high, and slopes towards the south, so that an intrenched camp on the summit would command the frontier line. On the right flank there is the North Channel, a branch of the Fraser, and beyond that lie marshes, which, when dyked, might be flooded at pleasure. The left flank is protected by the Pitt River, while a range of high ground stretches across the rear of the town; and behind this again lies an inlet of the sea, with an island stretching right across it which would admit of being easily fortified.

The commercial advantages of New Westminster are unfortunately not quite so conspicuous. It can, it is true, be reached without much difficulty by vessels under sail, as the river has, by the strength of its own stream, forced a passage through the extensive sandbanks which lie for five miles beyond its mouth, in the shoalest part of which there is always twelve feet of water at low tide, and from eighteen to twenty at high. A more formidable difficulty is to be found in the intricate navigation of the St. Juan Archipelago. "Although," says Captain Richards, commanding H. M. Surveying Ship *Plumper*, "the Gulf of Georgia and the channels leading into it have been navigated

by sailing vessels, yet the disadvantages are obvious and very great, and the loss of time incalculable. The general absence of steady winds among these channels, the great strength and uncertainty of the tides, and the existence of many hidden dangers, could not fail to be productive of constant accidents, and in a commercial point of view such a class of vessels could never answer." Mr. Pemberton argues from these facts that the capital of British Columbia should be either Victoria or Esquimaux, the latter being the only really good harbour on the coast. If British Columbia and Vancouver's Island were united, this would have been at least a feasible course, though even then the inhabitants of the mainland would probably have been jealous of the preference given to the island. But so long as they remain distinct colonies, such a step is obviously impossible. Nor do we see why the capital should of necessity be also the principal seaport. Natural advantages point out Esquimaux as the port of entry for sea-going ships, and no reasons of policy will prevent its becoming so. But the extraordinary number of islands and deep salt-water inlets which are found along the inner coast of Vancouver's Island and the whole western shore of the continent at once demand and give facilities for a system of internal navigation, both by steamers and coasting sailing vessels, extensive enough to supply all the demands of New Westminster and the other towns along the coast of the mainland.

With the view of encouraging an immigration of farmers from England, Australia, and the Canadas, whose object will be not merely to try their luck at the gold-diggings, but to create a home for themselves and their children, and who may form the nucleus of a settled agricultural population, the upset price of country lands was fixed at 10s. per acre. This inducement, however, was not found sufficient. At the first sale of surveyed lands, which took place at New Westminster in Oct. 1859, only four lots found a purchaser, and even these fetched no more than the upset price. At Douglas and Hope, owing, perhaps, to the neighbourhood of rising towns, persons were found anxious to have the right of purchasing, at a fixed price, any unsurveyed land they might improve, guaranteed them, and Governor Douglas has accordingly made this permission the basis of a "preemption law," conceived in a very liberal spirit. By this law any British subject, or any person intending to become a British subject, may acquire 160 acres of unoccupied and unsurveyed land, not being a town-site, auriferous land, or Indian reserve, on simply taking possession and recording his claim with the nearest magistrate, to whom he must also give a description and rough plan of the ground taken. Whenever the land shall be surveyed by the Government, the claimant or his heirs, if they have been in con-

tinuous occupation of the same land from the date of the record, will be entitled to purchase it at a price, not exceeding 10s. per acre, to be hereafter fixed by the Government. So soon as a person in possession has made permanent improvements in his land to the value of 10s. per acre, and obtained a certificate to that effect from the nearest magistrate, he will be able to pass a good title to a purchaser, who will then have the same right of purchase upon survey as the original claimant. The holder of 160 acres may also purchase at any time any additional quantity of unsurveyed land at the same price, 5s. of which is to be paid down, and the rest at the time of survey. Lands abandoned by a claimant may be taken up, with any improvements which may have been effected on them, by any person on the original terms. Whether this system will be found successful in attracting settlers remains to be seen.

And yet, so far as the agricultural capabilities of the country have been investigated, the reports have been highly favourable. Every where the mountains enclose valleys of singular beauty and fertility; along the rivers inaccessible cliffs alternate with levels covered with natural pasture; and barren rocks give place to park-like expanses of rich verdure, shaded by majestic trees; while on the coast the numerous islands are green throughout the winter. On the upper waters of the Fraser there is a good deal of land which is well suited either for stock or dairy farming. Even at Fort Alexandria crops are not injured by the frost more than once in every four or five years; and still farther to the north, almost at the frontier of the colony, along the banks of the Skeena River, Lake Babine, and Lake Stuart, Mr. Downie found large tracts of fine land, as well adapted for farming as any he had seen in the south. On the Thompson River the land is even better than on the Fraser, and increases in promise as you ascend the stream. In the neighbourhood of the Nicola River and Lake there is good grazing-ground, and the slopes of the mountains are covered with natural grasses. The only drawback to agriculture is a deposit of nitrate of soda, which, when present in large quantities, is injurious to wheat, though it does not affect vegetables. Towards the south the advantages of soil and climate are greater still. From Fort Kamloops, where the north and south forks of the Thompson unite to the Okanagan Lakes, there is a very large tract of pasture, if not farming-land; while in the Sinulkameen valley bunch-grass—"probably the best-known grazing food for cattle and horses"—is plentiful, and the soil admirably adapted for cultivation. "The soil, where it is richest," says Mr. Pemberton, "in the river deltas, the valleys, and the plains, usually consists of black vegetable mould, six inches to three feet in depth, over-

lying a deep substratum of clay, gravel, or sand; it is generally covered with a luxuriant crop of fern, which is very difficult to kill and tedious to eradicate. The native grasses of the country" (with the exception, it is to be supposed, of the bunch-grass before mentioned) "are of a poor Alpine character, springing up early in April, and dying away early in September. This deficiency is, however, to a great extent counterbalanced by native tares, clover, and vetches, which are, in most localities, abundant." As the colony has not as yet been surveyed, it is "impossible to state with accuracy the proportion that the open or available land bears to the waste: generally speaking, the tracts of land which are condemned as waste and unprofitable are such as have not been surveyed; and exploration and settlement have invariably led to the discovery of open land where least expected. Every addition to our knowledge of the country tells favourably on the ratio in question."

Wheat yields from twenty to forty bushels to the acre; but the fertility of the soil is even more shown by the production, from ordinary seed, of gigantic roots, fruits, and vegetables. Orchards would pay well, from the great demand for apples in the south-western states of the Pacific. Hops grow freely; and the fibre of the native hemp has been tested, and pronounced equal to Russian. Timber is every where abundant, though it rarely approaches those enormous dimensions which are common in California. The Douglas fir possesses immense strength, and has a bark resembling cork, which is often eight or nine inches thick, and makes excellent fuel. Large forests of the Menzies pine occur, of a size suitable for first-class spars; and the Kemlock spruce and the Weymouth pine, with many other less-known firs, are common throughout the colony. Two kinds of oak are found, but the timber is generally weak. Curled maple is abundant, as well as arbutus of a very large size, together with cypress, juniper, yew, birch, and poplar. Neither ash, beech, nor elm have as yet been noticed. Cattle may easily be procured from California, and the best breeds of sheep are abundant in Vancouver's Island. The native horses make good hacks, and have great powers of endurance. They have a singular repugnance to draught; but this is of less importance, as the carriage-horse is constantly met with. California also possesses a very fine breed of race-horses of English origin. The country is rich in game of all kinds. The elk is found on the coast, and deer on the numerous islands; while of nobler prey bears are common, and wolves larger than a Newfoundland dog; but the latter are, happily for the more peaceful settlers, "excessively shy." Swans, geese, and ducks abound on the coast and on the lakes, and grouse, snipe, and cranes in the interior. In the

spring and summer many kinds of salmon and salmon-trout ascend the rivers in numbers which realise the golden age of which we have recently heard so much in England. They are caught in all ways. In shallow water the Indians spear or stone them; in deep water they decoy them to the surface, or float their canoes down the stream, and lift them in with a landing net, or a strong hook tied to a stick; while from the banks the bear can take as many as he wants with his paws. Sturgeon of enormous size are found at the mouths of the rivers. Herrings are plentiful beyond all measure. The Indians scoop them in along shore with nets and boats. Even those thus caught are often as large as those at Yarmouth, while if they went farther out they would get finer ones. "One gentleman has turned to curing them, and makes four hundred per cent of his outlay."

Still, notwithstanding all these advantages, emigration, as we have seen, is almost at a stand; and although the average miner's earnings in British Columbia are double what they are in California, yet the expense of living in the former country is so much greater, amounting at the very lowest estimate to 60% a year, that miners for the most part prefer remaining in the latter. The cause of this is alleged, apparently with great reason, to be the want of any available means of communication with the interior. We need only look at a map to discover why this want is so long in being supplied. British Columbia is a land of mountains. It has the central chain of the Rocky Mountains for its eastern boundary, and two other ranges of great elevation are included within its limits. One of these, the Selkirk Mountains, runs parallel with, and at no great distance from, the central chain, while the other follows the line of the sea-coast, from which it rises by a short and precipitous slope. The latter is called indifferently the Coast and the Cascade Range. Between the two there are numerous lower ranges, with connecting tablelands. The valley of the Fraser opens a passage into the heart of the country; but, as may easily be imagined from the physical characteristics of the country, the river itself affords the traveller little assistance. For the first hundred miles from its mouth it is navigable for steamers, but above Yale it is little better than a foaming torrent, which rushes between inaccessible cliffs, along whose sides run paths often less than an inch in breadth, over which the Indians contrive to travel with heavy loads on their backs. This portion of the route has, we believe, been somewhat improved by blasting, and a more practicable line of communication has been opened, after great exertions on the part of the Governor, Mr. Douglas, by which it may be altogether avoided. Within the angle which the Fraser makes at Hope lie four lakes, the northernmost of which is only four miles distant from "the

Fountain," a point on the upper course of the Fraser forty miles above its confluence with the Thompson, while the southernmost communicates by the Harrison River with the navigable waters of the same stream. Steamers and large boats have been placed on these lakes, and a road made over the intervening country. Other openings in the Cascade Range exist besides the one through which the Fraser finds a passage. The coast of British Columbia is penetrated by a succession of inlets, extending in some instances more than a hundred miles inland, and bearing some resemblance to the Norwegian fiords. Many of these have rivers of considerable size flowing into them, and though none of them have been as yet thoroughly explored, it seems probable that some more direct communication between the sea and the interior may hereafter be discovered than is afforded by the Fraser River.

The chief obstacle to the rapid opening up of these and other routes is of course the expense which necessarily attends all engineering operations in so mountainous a country. Hitherto, the revenue of the colony has been quite inadequate to meet any large demands on this score. The receipts for the year 1859 were reckoned beforehand by the Governor at about 50,000*l.*, of which the Customs contributed 18,464*l.*; and though an export-duty on gold has several times been talked of, which is to raise the revenue to 100,000*l.* per annum, we are not aware that it has yet been resorted to. The favourite theory in this, as in most other colonies, is, that the mother country should come forward to help them out of the difficulty. The earlier part of the Governor's correspondence with the Colonial Office is filled with suggestions, the carrying out of which would have probably involved much larger advances on the part of the Imperial Government than the 200,000*l.* which his own "opinion of the matter is, Parliament should at once grant, either as a free gift or a loan to be repaid hereafter, in order to give the new colony a fair start in a manner becoming the great nation of whose empire it forms a part." To this request Sir E. B. Lytton replied in a very carefully studied despatch, the policy of which has been since emphatically endorsed by the Duke of Newcastle.

"I cannot avoid reminding you, that the lavish pecuniary expenditure of the mother country in founding new colonies has been generally found to discourage economy, by leading the minds of men to rely on foreign aid instead of their own exertions; to interfere with the healthy action by which a new community provides, step by step, for its own requirements; and to produce at last a general sense of discouragement and dissatisfaction. For a colony to thrive and develop itself with steadfast and healthful progress, it should from the first be as far

as possible self-supporting. . . . No doubt, it might be more agreeable to the pride of the first founders of a colony which promises to become so important, if we could at once throw up public buildings, and institute establishments on a scale adapted to the prospective grandeur of the infant settlement. But after all, it is on the character of the inhabitants that we must rest our hopes for the land we redeem from the wilderness; and it is by self-exertion and the noble spirit of self-sacrifice, which self-exertion engenders, that communities advance through rough beginnings to permanent greatness. Therefore, it is not merely for the sake of sparing the mother country that I invite your cordial and intelligent coöperation in stimulating the pride of the colonists to submit to some necessary privations in the first instance, and to contribute liberally and voluntarily from their own earnings (which appear to be so considerable), rather than to lean upon the British Parliament for grants, or for loans, which are rarely repaid without discontent, and can never be cancelled without some loss of probity and honour. It is my hope that when the time arrives for representative institutions, the colony may be committed to that grand experiment unembarrassed by a shilling of debt; and the colonists have proved their fitness for self-government by the spirit of independence which shrinks from extraneous aid, and schools a community to endure the sacrifice by which it guards its own safety, and provides for its own wants.*"

Mr. Pemberton, after quoting this despatch, proceeds to join issue with the principles it enunciates. "If," he says by way of a *reductio ad absurdum*, "the same reasoning may be applied to communities as to individuals, it would be equally impolitic for an individual to borrow money at interest, on the security of a large landed estate, for its improvement; repayment of such a loan would occasion discontent; and if the lender should propose to cancel the bond, and with it the debt, the borrower would experience a certain twinge of moral degradation." And then, in support of his position that "it may, in certain cases, be to the interest of England to encourage the expenditure of, and in some instances even to provide, the capital required to make the country habitable, or at least accessible, and to control that expenditure, the debt being a charge against the land and revenues of the country generally," he instances the practice of the United States, where all the preparatory expenses of a territory are defrayed by the Federal Government, which continues to retain the principal appointments, and to receive the revenues after the admission of the territory into the Union until it has reimbursed itself for the outlay. So far as the mere "expenditure of capital" is concerned, we are not aware that our colonies have ever shown themselves in need of encouragement from the mother country; as regards its provision, the example is not very perti-

* Papers relative to the Affairs of British Columbia, part ii. p. 75.

ment to the question at issue. The growth of the American Union is not a case of colonisation at all. It is an extension of the central organisation to outlying territory, not hitherto comprehended within it; and the retention of the revenues in the hands of the Federal Government is no hardship when the state so administered becomes at the same time an integral part of the Federation, with representatives in the Federal Legislature, and a share in the appointment of the Federal Executive. But the grant of representative institutions to a colony bears no resemblance to the admission of a state into the Union; and if England is to retain any security for advances she has made to the colonists, the privilege of self-government must either be withheld until the debt is paid off, or the concession must be accompanied by the drawback of a constant and most vexatious interference on the part of the Imperial Government. Nor is the analogy of "an individual" more to the point. The security for money lent to a community is not the improved value of the territory, but the readiness of its members to tax themselves for its repayment; and we do not see why this expedient should not be resorted to first as well as last. The progress of roads and public works may be somewhat slower when the funds are provided by contemporaneous local taxation than when they are raised by loans; but, at all events, there will be greater inducements to economy, and no after sting in the shape of a public debt. In this respect, Mr. Pemberton's clients may well profit by the example he has proposed for our imitation. "Of all the economical causes," says Mr. Herman Merivale,* "which have been suggested for that painful inferiority in the evidence of public spirit, wealth, and activity, which seems to strike all observers in passing from the United States into our neighbouring provinces, the absence of local taxation is the most substantial, perhaps the only substantial one. . . . It remains to be seen whether our northern colonies have sufficient perception of their own interests, and sufficient public virtue, to impose on themselves the necessary sacrifices."

But although the expense of opening up communications with the interior of British Columbia must, in fairness, be borne by the settlers themselves, there is another public work, of almost equal importance to the development of the colony, in which they may fairly look for assistance from the mother country. The establishment of a British overland route from Canada to the Pacific, while it would contribute greatly to the safety and growth of British Columbia would also have a direct bearing on imperial interests. It would promote the union of the British possessions in North America, accelerate our postal and passenger

* Lectures on Colonisation and Colonies, second edition, p. 448.

communication with Australia, and perhaps put our trade with China on an entirely new footing. All these considerations will no doubt have their due weight with the Imperial Government, and secure its utmost aid in furtherance of any well-considered scheme for accomplishing the object in question. In our last Number we described the facilities for the construction either of a wagon-road or railway afforded by the vast and nearly level plains which border on the Saskatchewan River. We now take up the subject where we left it, at the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains.

The passage of this great mountain-chain may be effected at several points throughout the whole extent of British Columbia, the northernmost—from the Findlay to the Babine River, in lat. $56^{\circ} 30'$ —being at the extreme northern boundary of the colony, while the southernmost is only a few miles above the United States frontier. The first of these, however, as well as two others which lead from the Peace River, may be left out of consideration as being too far to the north, on the east side of the mountains. To the south of lat. 54° the known passes are the following:

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|---|----------------------|
| 1. Leather Pass, or Yellow Head Portage | lat. $54^{\circ} 0'$ |
| 2. Athabasca Portage | " $53^{\circ} 0'$ |
| 3. Howse's Pass | " $51^{\circ} 45'$ |
| 4. Kicking Horse Pass | " $51^{\circ} 25'$ |
| 5. Vermillion Pass | " $51^{\circ} 10'$ |
| 6. Kananaskis Pass | " $50^{\circ} 40'$ |
| 7. Crow Nest Pass | " $49^{\circ} 40'$ |
| 8. Kootanie Pass | " $49^{\circ} 25'$ |

Leather Pass leads from the Athabasca River to the head waters of the Fraser. It has occasionally been used by the Hudson's Bay Company's servants, though only for water carriage, and it may hereafter prove of importance in connexion with the track discovered by Mr. Downie from the mouth of the Skeena River to Stuart Lake. Athabasca Portage connects the Athabasca with the Columbia River. It is the pass used by the fur-traders in their canoe journeys from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific. Howse's Pass, the most northerly of the land passes, was discovered by Mr. Howse in 1810, and explored, or rather rediscovered, by Dr. Hector in 1859. It leads by an almost imperceptible ascent from the head-waters of the North Saskatchewan, up a valley closely hemmed in by lofty precipices, and then follows the course of the Blaeberry River to its confluence with the Columbia. On the western side there is a fall of 2000 feet in thirty-five miles. The summit level is 4800 feet. Dr. Hector wished to descend the Columbia from this point to the great bend, and endeavour to pass from thence by the valley of Canoe

River to the head-waters of the Thompson, but he was unable to do so owing to the density of the forest and the lateness of the season. Kicking Horse Pass connects Bow River, the most important feeder of the South Saskatchewan, with Beaver Foot River, a tributary of the Kootanie. The western slope is very abrupt, and there is a fall of 1000 feet in the first mile. The summit-level is 5120 feet. Vermillion Pass was discovered by Dr. Hector, who, after six hours' march through thick woods, reached the height of land at a point 4944 feet above the sea, but only 840 feet above the commencement of the ascent at the Old Bow Fort; 200 yards farther on he came to the Vermillion River, which descends 1227 feet in the course of forty miles, and falls into the Kootanie. In the Kananaskis Pass the height of land is 5985 feet above the sea, and 1885 feet above the Old Fort. The ascent on the east side is easy, but on the west there is a precipitous slope of 960 feet. The Crow Nest Pass has never been explored. Its eastern entrance is on the river from which it takes its name, and its western in the neighbourhood of Mount Deception. The Kootanie Pass is the shortest of all. It leads from Belly River, the southern feeder of the South Saskatchewan, and crosses a double line of mountains, each reaching a height of 6000 feet. On the western side there is a fall of 2000 feet in two miles. Captain Blakiston, by whom this pass has been very carefully surveyed, proposes to overcome these difficulties by two tunnels, one five miles long and the other three, and a ten miles' incline, of 190 feet per mile.

The comparative advantages of the Vermillion, Kananaskis, and Kootanie Passes are thus summed up by Captain Palliser:

"The Kananaskis Pass and the British Kootanie Pass were examined by myself. Of these, I consider the Kananaskis Pass the preferable one, both on account of its direct course through the mountains and its easier ascent.

The ascent to the height of land from the east is through a wide gently sloping valley, and the immediate watershed is formed by a narrow ridge, which, if pierced by a short tunnel, would reduce the summit-level to about 4600 feet above the sea. The descent to the west, into which Kananaskis Pass opens, is comparatively easy.

The British Kootanie Pass also opens out into the Kootanie River Valley, but the altitude here to be overcome is much greater, amounting to 6000 feet. There are likewise two ridges to be passed, which fact would form a very strong objection to this pass.

The Vermillion Pass presents on a whole the greatest natural facilities for crossing the mountains without the aid of engineering work, as the rise to the height of land is gradual from both sides; a feature which seems to be peculiar to this pass. It would thus be impossible to diminish its summit-level (which is less than 5000 feet), as is pro-

posed in the case of Kananaskis Pass, but on the other hand it would be the most suitable for the construction of an easy *wagon-road*.*

The long and almost level valley into which all these passes, from Howse's Pass southward, open out, is one of the most remarkable features of this part of the Rocky Mountains.

"It is continued to the south," says Dr. Hector, "from the Columbia Lakes by the valley through which the Kootanie River flows; and the famous wintering ground in the Bitter Root Valley, to which the settlers flock from Colville and other places, is, without doubt, the continuation of the same great natural feature. It is the belief that this valley is continued to the north, following the course of Canoe River, that makes me so sanguine, that by this route a passage could be effected into the valleys of either Thompson or Fraser's River. However, we know so little of the head-waters of those rivers, that I think it would be premature to offer an opinion on the point.

As far south as lat. 51° N., I found great difficulty in traversing this valley, from the nature of the woods with which it is clothed, consisting of a forest-growth of northern character. After passing a bend which occurs in that latitude, however, the forest assumes almost suddenly a Californian aspect, free from underwood, with stretches of open prairie clothed with bunch grass, the prevailing tree being the *pinus ponderosa*; whereas, farther down the Columbia and to the north, spruce-firs predominate.

The Columbia River continues to be of large size to its source, as from the small inclination of the valley through which it flows it preserves more the character of a sluggish canal than of a mountain stream.

A narrow belt of open timbered land, only slightly elevated above the upper Columbia Lake, separates the source of the Columbia from the Kootanie River, a swift stream of large size flowing to the south. Before reaching this point the Kootanie River breaks through a rocky cañon, and it is at this point that it enters the great longitudinal valley, through which it flows to the south, forming the camping grounds of the Kootanie Indians.†

The country lying between the southern end of this valley and Fort Shepherd on the Columbia, just within the British frontier, was travelled over by Mr. Sullivan, Captain Palliser's secretary; and this gentleman was thoroughly convinced of the "entire practicability" of a road between those points more than three-fourths of which might be rendered available for a railway, whilst even in the remaining part the principal obstacle seems to be the quantity of fallen timber left by the fires which constantly devastate the forests. From Fort Shepherd westwards three routes seem to be practicable. One is the old Hudson's Bay Company's trail to Hope, which runs nearly parallel with the boundary line. The objection to the adoption of this line is the great expense of carrying a road across the Cascade Range. A

* Further Papers, p. 22.

† Ibid. p. 27.

second course is to ascend the Columbia, which is "*said* to be navigable for steamers" all the way to the upper Arrow Lake, and thence to cross a table-land, "*along* which it is *said* that horses may travel," to Great Okanagan Lake. The third plan would be to go up the Okanagan Lakes themselves, or the valley of the Similkameen River, and across to Lake Nicola; from whence the road would either follow the course of the Nicola River to Lytton, or of the Buonaparte River to Kayoosch.

We have left to the last a subject more important, perhaps, than any other which can be named in connexion with British Columbia, and, indeed, with all future settlements in the north-west territory. We have to legislate not only for the white settlers, but for more than 100,000 Indians also.* It is the fashion with some persons to speak of the extinction of these aboriginal races as the result of an inevitable law. In a certain sense this statement may perhaps be true. The uncivilised red man can hardly live side by side with the white man, and there is little probability that pure-blooded Indians will ever be found existing as distinct and civilised communities in the midst of an Anglo-Saxon population. But it is sometimes convenient to forget that isolation, whether barbarous or civilised, may not be the only or even the preferable alternative; and the inevitable law has too often been invoked to give a sanction or an excuse to deeds which disgrace humanity. It would seem to be a part of the process of extinction that the conquered should impart to the conqueror a double portion of his ferocity, and the "favoured race" maintains its position in the "struggle for life" by the unprovoked burning of Indian villages, and the indiscriminate slaughter of Indian women and children. Fortunately, indeed, British territory is as yet unstained by the atrocities which have made the Indian wars of the United States so notorious; and, on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, the natives have been favourably disposed towards the English by their experience of the Hudson's Bay Company's rule. But we must not trust the ordinary impulses of humanity too far. The low estimate of human life, which is the characteristic of an adventurous state of society, the still lower estimate of Indian life which results from habitual and distrustful intercourse,† the justification too often supplied by a sense of danger,—all these adverse influences will come into play so soon as the interests of the settlers are found to be opposed to those of the natives. All history tells us that no

* 75,000 in British Columbia, and from 40,000 to 60,000 on the east side of the Rocky Mountains.

† In California, we are told by the *New York Times*, "it is the custom of miners generally to shoot an Indian as he would a dog; and it is considered a very good joke to shoot at one at long shot, to see him jump as the fatal bullet pierces his heart."

effective interference on behalf of a subject race can be looked for from the persons immediately interested in their subjection. The machinery for the protection of the Indian must be the work of the imperial authorities, not the offspring of colonial convenience, or the plaything of colonial caprice.

But it is easier to say who are to be the legislators than to determine precisely the nature of the legislation required. If we listen to the Aborigines Protection Society, they tell us that "the Indians regard their rights as natives as giving them a greater title to enjoy the riches of the country than can possibly be possessed either by the English Government or by foreign adventurers;" and they suggest, "that the native title should be recognised in British Columbia, and that some reasonable adjustment of their claims should be made by the British Government," such adjustment to include "payment for that which it may be necessary for us to acquire." Now,—passing over such obvious objections to this theory as that, if "the native title" is to be recognised, the British Government, as an adjusting and controlling power, has no business in British Columbia at all; and that dealing with the natives on equal terms implies a right on their part to decline dealing altogether, in which case it is absurd to talk of its being "necessary for us to acquire" any thing,—let us look at the experience of the United States. There the common practice until lately has been to conclude treaties with the native tribes for the purchase or exchange of their lands. But no money-payment, however large, can make up to the Indian for the loss of his hunting-grounds. His old manner of life is closed against him; he has no help given him in finding out any other. The consequence is, that he either courts immediate destruction by rushing into a hopeless war, or lingers on an outcast in a land which daily becomes more unsuited to him. In some cases, however, lands beyond the limits of the settlements have been allotted to the natives in lieu of those taken from them; but the process of extermination is still only delayed. The minds of the white settlers have been familiarised with the idea of removal, and by the time that the Indians have begun, slowly and painfully, to settle down to a changed life, and to make some progress in the cultivation of the soil, the advancing tide of population has caught them up, the settlers demand their expulsion from their new dwelling-place as loudly as they did from their old one, and so the process is again and again repeated, while, with each successive change, comes a fresh and more hopeless relapse into the barbarism from which they might, at one time, have escaped. The only means of preventing these evils seems to be to insist, in the first instance, that the natives shall be regarded as a charge upon the lands to

which they belong. A system of this kind has been successfully introduced by Sir G. Grey at the Cape of Good Hope, and Mr. Douglas proposes to form Indian reserves, in anticipation of settlement in all the districts of British Columbia inhabited by native tribes.

"These reserves should, in all cases, include their cultivated fields and village sites, for which, from habit and association, they invariably conceive a strong attachment, and prize more for that reason than for the extent or value of the land. The remaining unoccupied land should be let out on leases at an annual rent to the highest bidder, and the whole proceeds arising from such leases should be applied to the exclusive benefit of the Indians. An amount of capital would thereby be created, equal, perhaps, to the sum required for effecting the settlement of the Indians; and any surplus funds remaining over that outlay, it is proposed to devote to the formation and support of schools, and of a clergyman to superintend their moral and religious training.

The support of the Indians will thus, wherever land is valuable, be a matter of easy accomplishment; and in districts where the white population is small and the land unproductive, the Indians may be left almost wholly to their own resources, and, as a joint means of earning their livelihood, to pursue unmolested their favourite calling of fishermen and hunters."*

Still it will not be enough to plant the natives in these reserves; they must at the same time be fitted in some degree to endure the contact of a white population. The difficulty against which we have to struggle in the attempt to civilise the North-American Indian, is not so much an intellectual inaptitude as a moral distaste. There are instances on record of Indian tribes which, under favourable circumstances, have made very considerable progress. In the United States, the Cherokees, before their last removal, in a community of 15,560 persons (including 1277 Negro slaves), had 18 schools, 36 grist-mills, 13 saw-mills, 762 looms, 2480 spinning-wheels, 172 wagons, 2923 ploughs, 7683 horses, 22,531 black cattle, 46,732 swine, 2546 sheep, 430 goats, 62 blacksmiths' shops, with public roads, turn-pikes, ferries, and newspapers in their own language.† But generally speaking, the Indian does not care for civilisation. He recognises its presence, wonders at its achievements, admits his own inability to resist its approach; but he feels for it neither admiration nor sympathy. He regards it as a barbarian might have regarded the civilisation of the Roman Empire, or as a feudal baron might have regarded the progress of the great trading

* Papers relative to British Columbia, part ii. p. 63.

† Stuart's *Three Years in North America*, quoted in Merivale's *Colonisation and Colonies*, p. 550.

cities. He has a certain contempt for it all the while. He dislikes the restraint which it imposes upon him, the interference to which it subjects him. Civilisation keeps her prosaic side turned towards him; and in the exaltation of labour he sees only degradation, in the habits of settled life only the loss of the excitement which made life pleasant. No gentleman of the old school has a more thorough sense of the vulgarity of the new state of things than the North-American Indian. Our first step, therefore, in dealing with him, must be to find out some means of altering his estimate of the white man, some element of superiority which he will not only recognise, but desire to share. We believe that the only way of civilising him is to begin with giving him religious instruction. If this can be done successfully, our great difficulty is over. He no longer regards the white man as a being of an alien, and in some sort an inferior, race. And that it can be done successfully may, we think, be taken for granted.

"The North-American Indian," says Mr. Merivale, "is of a disposition peculiarly religious; and it is remarkable, considering the great amount of observation and of theory which has been expended on this singular race, how imperfectly and unjustly its qualifications in this particular have been appreciated. For it is not by the positive tenets of its belief, if such they may be termed, that the religious tendencies of the savage mind are to be estimated. . . . A far better insight into the religious state of the American Indian will be obtained by observing how peculiarly and emphatically he is, in the words of the apostle, 'a law unto himself.' I mean, how distinctly he evinces, in the whole moral conduct of his life, that he lives under a strong and awful sense of positive obligation. It is of little matter with what doctrines that sense of obligation connects itself. It often appears to connect itself with none. The Indian cannot tell why a burden is laid upon him to act in this or that manner. He obeys a law undefined, unwritten, but mysteriously binding upon his spirit. . . . If religion be what its name implies, *id quod relligat*, that which binds the will and enforces self-denial and self-devotion, be the object or motive held out what it may, then no people, taken in the mass, is to be compared, in this respect, to the savages of America. . . . Now when we consider that the same creature, whose moral organisation is thus wonderfully developed, is one who has frequently not the slightest taste or appreciation for the advantages of material improvement, and who ranks so low, in point of intellectual acquirement, that he is, perhaps, unable to count beyond ten—can any one entertain a doubt at which end the process of culture ought to begin? Surely the comparison of their moral state with their condition in other respects is, as it were, the crucial test, pointing out infallibly the direction in which alone, if in any, success is to be reasonably expected. In the expressive words of Penn, 'What good might not a good people graft, where there is so distinct a knowledge both of good and evil!'"*

* Colonisation and Colonies, pp. 526-528.

And next to their conversion, the object most important to be kept in view is, the necessity of encouraging in every possible way the amalgamation of the native races with the white population. It is true that this end must be pursued under proper precautions. We must take care that we do not, under the plea of putting the Indian on perfect equality with the white man, leave him in effect without any protection against him. Indeed, until we have raised the natives to a real equality with the settlers, perhaps the less we use the term the better. If we invest the Indian with all the rights and privileges of the European, if we give him for instance freedom of contract and freedom of alienation, one of two consequences will certainly follow. Either he will be cajoled to use his liberty to his own detriment, or he will be useless to, and therefore unemployed by, the settler. For a time, at all events, the old Spanish system of treating the Indians as minors, is probably the safest that can be devised; but, with this proviso, the more useful the natives can be rendered to the settlers, the better for their own ultimate position. The Hudson's Bay Company have long employed them to good purpose in several capacities. They are admirable boatmen and herdsmen; and as colonisation progresses these are just the services for which there will be most demand in settlements where a large portion of the internal intercourse must be carried on by water, and where much of the wealth of the inhabitants will consist of cattle and horses. But the relation of master and servant, though the most obvious, is not the only one which will grow up between the two races. The absence of any female white population in British Columbia must lead to a very large mixture of blood. If this can be effected without that utter corruption of morals which is to be dreaded, even under more favourable circumstances, in a community so miscellaneous and so degraded as the miners of British Columbia, this species of amalgamation is decidedly matter for congratulation. The presence of a half-breed population, such as already exists at the Red River, forms a most important link between the native and the European, while it is an element which, if it does not bear an undue proportion to the community at large, is in itself very well suited to the incipient civilisation of settlements just reclaimed from the wilderness. How far these and similar measures will be productive of any substantial benefit to their objects it would, after so many efforts and so many failures, be rash to predict. But it is none the less our duty to make the attempt; and if the prospect afforded by the sad retrospect of death and suffering, which the history of our dealings with aboriginal races offers to our view, is one of no ordinary discouragement, its contemplation may at least supply us with some dearly bought experience, and some salutary warnings.

ART. V.—DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES AND ELSIE
VENNER.

Elsie Venner; a Romance of Destiny. By Oliver Wendell Holmes.
Cambridge and London: Macmillan and Co.

IN one of his earlier essays, Mr. Martineau illustrates the shadowy and inchoate perceptions which in many minds supply the place of fixed and definite convictions, by reference to the stage direction in a certain German drama, in which Adam is represented as crossing the stage "going to be created." We have much the same feeling in the perusal of many American works. The literature of the United States has as yet scarcely a substantive existence: it passes before us "going to be created." Its best works are scarcely more than a promise of excellence, the precursors of an advent, shadows cast before; and, like most shadows, they are too vague and ill-defined, too fluctuating and easily distorted into grotesque forms, to enable us to discriminate accurately the shape from which they are flung. We speak especially of creative and original literature, of poetry and fiction, of art in its widest sense, and of criticism which can no more exist apart from the contemporaneous production of great works of art than vision can exist without light. Indeed, the absence of great critics in America would of itself furnish sufficient indirect evidence,—if direct evidence were wanting,—of the absence of creative literary genius. According to Dr. Holmes, "Nature, when she invented, manufactured, and patented her authors, contrived to make critics out of the chips that were left." Authors, therefore, are the necessary condition of critics. The latter are chips of the same block; and if the material be sound and good in the one, it will be so also in the other. They are *homoeousian*, to adopt a theological word. When criticism is at a low ebb, in any community that has attained the reflective stage, it is because art is not at a high one. The stream cannot ascend higher than its source. In other departments than the *belles lettres*, American literature shows to less disadvantage. In law, in history, in divinity, in even speculation, she occupies a respectable place. The names of Kent and Story and Wheaton, of Prescott, Bancroft, and Motley, of Channing and Parker, of Bushnell and Emerson, would occupy a distinguished rank in any literature. American life is essentially practical; and literature, with a bearing on affairs, has at once scope and stimulus. The first business of a young

society is to organise itself; the great work of a free and self-governing society is administration. Studies, therefore, which have to do with social organisation, and with the institutions and laws, which are the channels and regulators of social life, will flourish in such a people. The habits of local self-government which the parish, municipal, state, and federal institutions of the country foster, afford the materials and create the necessity of judicial science. Acquaintance with modern political life throws essential light upon past politics, that is, on history, and receives light from it in return. To this circumstance probably, acting upon an hereditary character formed in the English struggles for freedom, America owes its really great jurists and its respectable historians, no less than its orators and statesmen. For we must not allow Polk and Buchanan and Marcy and Cass to lead us into forgetfulness that, at no distant date, America had its Clay and Calhoun and Webster. Oratory, statesmanship, jurisprudence, and history,—these are the natural product of the action of American circumstances and inherited character upon the higher intellect of the nation. The strongly marked speculative and religious tendencies of the American mind are in part the contrasted effects of the same cause. The first settlers, Puritans to start with, and thrown face to face with nature and its wonderful forces, compelled to strive with and subdue the forest and the torrent, felt themselves very near to God,—startled by his presence. They were religious, as the mountaineer and sailor, and those who lead a life encompassed by perils and deliverances, are religious. The same feeling still characterises the Western settler. On the other hand, in the great cities of New England and the Northern States, religion is a relief sought from the wearing monotony of business, or a counter-excitement against its excitements. Where religion is, philosophy, in some form or other, is sure to be; just as where art is, we shall find, when the first stage of instinctive creation is past, criticism. Philosophy, indeed, is the critique of religion. Both are engaged on the same transcendent themes, before which the one bows down in reverent humility, exclaiming, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me," while the other seeks, with not less reverence, to know. Speculation and worship have alike their origin in wonder, exciting awe and stimulating curiosity. The cherubim and the seraphim render their differing homage to Him who, while He is Love, is also Light in which there is no darkness.

These causes, which have naturally and obviously given Americans an honourable place in law, in oratory, and in history, and which have as naturally, though not so obviously, conspired, with the accidents of individual genius, in the production among

her of great divines and acute and original thinkers,—the causes which have so operated have been fatal, or at least have militated against the growth of imaginative literature of the brightest order. That the poet is born, and not made, is, as it is commonly understood, a far more questionable saying than that poetry grows, and is not made. It is a spontaneous product, requiring, indeed, pruning and culture, not a manufacture. The hurry and bustle in which the Americans, as a nation, live, the rough conflict with outward things in which, of necessity, they are engaged, do not allow them to wait for the germination and unfolding of those seeds of thought from which every great imaginative work must spring. The ground must lie fallow to be productive, and the Americans never let their ground lie fallow. A poetic conception must have lain long in the mind before it develops its own intrinsic character, and surrounds itself with suitable external relations. It is first there as a faint suggestion of a truth in, or soon assuming, symbolic form,—parable, allegory, narrative,—surrounding itself, by a sort of elective affinity of ideas, with appropriate imagery, circumstances, and action. The thought and its outward shape grow together: they are one and inseparable; the idea being apprehended only as it slowly bodies itself forth, and then only complete when its outer habitation is complete. For this, as for all things which involve the operation of faculties in a great degree independent of the will, time is necessary. Pressure cannot be put on to hasten the work. Hence it is that a man, even of the highest faculties, can no more say, “Go to; I will make a great poem, or fiction, or painting,” than he can say, “Go to; I will make a religion.” Leisure and tranquil contemplation are essential; and it is for these that American life affords the least scope. Nor does the country possess those associations on which the imagination loves to feed. As Dr. Wendell Holmes himself more than half hints, the “common New England life” is a “lean, impoverished life, in distinction from a rich and suggestive one.” “There is no sufficient flavour of humanity in the soil out of which we grow.” What America has of romantic interest runs back to other and perishing races. With a single illustrious exception, the only fictions which are indigenous to the country, which are in any sense racy of the soil, are Cooper’s stories of the red men. The only poem of which the same can be predicated, with any plausibility even, is Longfellow’s *Hiawatha*. They confirm what we have said; for though these stories and the poem are American in scenery and incident, they are American in the ethnologist’s sense, and not Anglo-American. They might have been written on either side of the Great Lakes. Once clear of the hunting-grounds and the wigwam,

Mr. Cooper sinks to the level of Mr. G. P. R. James as an imitator of Scott; and Mr. Longfellow—we will not say to that of Dr. Charles Mackay—but to that of an ingenious experimenter in verse, filled with graceful European culture, and fresh from the European schools. The greatest of American novelists—Nathaniel Hawthorne—confesses, or rather complains, that America will not grow romances. He feels or fancies himself obliged to transport even his fertile genius to a foreign soil, before it will bring forth its maturest fruit. He may indeed be cited against his own theory. *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House with Seven Gables*, *The Blythedale Romance* rise up in protest against his doctrine. But Mr. Hawthorne is the proverbial “one swallow.” He is the solitary exception to his own rule; and he may very well, under the circumstances, stand excused for having, with characteristic modesty, overlooked that exception. The only other illustrious name which could be appealed to against us is that of Washington Irving. But Washington Irving was not an American. We admit that, by an accident which we cannot account for, and for which we are not responsible, he was born in America. He was really, however, an Englishman; and not even a modern Englishman, but an Englishman of the time of Queen Anne, a contemporary of Addison and Steele; and in tastes, culture, and style, belongs to the Kit-Cat Club. In poetry, the case is even worse. The names of Longfellow, Bryant, Lowell, and Whittier, bring to our minds much touching or generous sentiment, and satiric or fantastic humour, clothed in fitting verse; but they only prove that America as yet *caret vate sacro*. Edgar Allen Poe, infinitely lower in many respects, exceeds them all in intensity, and makes the nearest approach to genius. The truth is, that American literature, apart from that of England, has no separate existence; any more than Belgian or Swiss literature has a separate existence as distinguished from that of France. The United States have yet to sign their intellectual Declaration of Independence. They are mentally still only a province of this country. They import their literature ready made. Any one who will look at the columns of almost any American newspaper will see how completely this is the case. The stories of Bulwer and Dickens, of Thackeray and Trollope, even of the thrilling authors who supply the *London Journal* or *Family Herald* with its weekly banquet of horrors, fill the broadsheets of the United States. This circumstance coöperates with the others which we have described to depress home talent. The market is glutted with better and cheaper (because stolen) articles from abroad. In the end, however, honesty would be the better policy. In literature, the principle of protection to native indus-

try has a proper application. A law of international copyright would do something to give America a national literature, the natural outcome and feeder of a vigorous national life.

Before speaking briefly of the work which is named at the head of this article, we must say a few words of Dr. Holmes himself. If, as some advocates of the doctrine of hereditary transmission maintain, it is impossible to understand a man without having known his ancestors up, at least, to the second generation backwards, it is as impossible thoroughly to appreciate a work of art without knowing something of the artist. There are few cultivated English readers to whom *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* requires an introduction. The book so named, with its successor, *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*, has been widely read and much admired in this country. They have, we believe, achieved an unbounded popularity at home, not without reason. Dr. Holmes is indisputably and above all an entertaining writer. He thinks, and he can express his thought articulately. He flashes upon you an ingenious suggestion, or a whimsical paradox, clothed in fantastic guise, and without giving you time to pause upon the truth it contains, or to reflect even whether what seems so plausible is true, presents you with another and another in endless sequence. The general effect is somewhat kaleidoscopic. It suits, we suppose, the rapid hurry of the American mind, which cannot delay upon any thing, but which glances quickly over a thousand things; which is curious, but has its curiosity easily sated; which propounds countless questions, and is contented with the first plausible reply. Another source of Dr. Holmes's American popularity lies, no doubt, in the circumstance that he is a man of varied culture, accomplished in no ordinary degree; and that he addresses a people among whom a certain low average of education is universal, but among whom a high order of cultivation is rare. His writings abound in pleasant hints, stimulative to curiosity, of regions of thought and literature into which his readers have never penetrated; and they agreeably enlarge, though by fitful glimpses, which rapidly close in, the mental horizon of the great body of subscribers to the *Atlantic Monthly*. But though enriched with European culture, Dr. Holmes is essentially an American. Rub the varnish off the Russian, and the Tartar is seen beneath. There is the exaggerated provincialism of sentiment, the confusion of extent of territory with national greatness, of democratic equality with personal freedom, which characterise the typical American. There are few Englishmen who will be able to read such passages as the following without a smile. The professor speaks at the breakfast-table.

"A young fellow, born of good stock, in one of the more thoroughly

civilised portions of these United States of America, bred in good principles, inheriting a social position which makes him at his ease every where, means sufficient to educate him thoroughly without taking away the stimulus to vigorous exertion, and with good opening in some honourable path of labour, is the finest sight our private satellite has had the opportunity of inspecting on the planet to which she belongs."

After pointing out the great superiority of the young American over the young Greek, much in the spirit in which Mr. Hannibal Chollop combated the assertion of the *Spartan Portico* (a tri-weekly journal) that the ancient Athenians went a-head of the present Loco-foco Ticket, Dr. Holmes proceeds with almost lyrical enthusiasm :

"Never since man came into this atmosphere of oxygen and azote was there any thing like the condition of the young American of the nineteenth century. Having in possession, or in prospect, the best part of half a world, with all its climates and soils to choose from; equipped with wings of fire and smoke that fly with him day and night, so that he counts his journey, not in miles, but in degrees, and sees the seasons change as the wild fowl sees them in his annual flight; with huge leviathans always ready to take him on their broad backs, and push behind them with their pectoral or caudal fins the waters that seam the continent or separate the hemispheres; heir of all old civilisations, founder of that new one which, if all the prophecies of the human heart are not lies, is to be the noblest as it is to be the last; isolated in space as from the races that are governed by dynasties whose divine right grows out of human wrong, yet knit into the most absolute solidarity with mankind of all times and places by the one great thought he inherits as his national birthright; free to form and express his opinions on *almost** every subject, and assured that he will *soon** acquire the last franchise which men withhold from men—that of stating the laws of his Spiritual Being, and the beliefs he accepts without hindrance, except from clearer views of truth,—he seems to want nothing for a large, wholesome, noble, beneficent life. In fact, the chief danger is that he will think the whole planet is made for him, and forget that there are some possibilities left in the *débris* of the Old-World civilisation which deserve a respectful treatment at his hands."

We grant the young American "the wings of fire and smoke" and "huge leviathans" with "broad backs" and "pectoral or caudal fins,"—that is, ill-made railroads and explosive steamboats, and a vast territory to traverse in these insecure conveyances. We may also grant that his "chief danger," as with all half-educated persons, lies in that boastful self-exaggeration, which is the result of complete ignorance, or only superficial knowledge of past history and foreign lands. But we deny the justice of the advantage attributed to America in the following passage.

"I doubt if we have more practical freedom in America than they

• The italics are our own.

have in England,' I said. 'An Englishman thinks as he likes in religion and politics. Mr. Martineau speculates as freely as ever Dr. Channing did, and Mr. Bright is as independent as Mr. Seward.'

'Sir,' said he, 'it isn't what a man thinks or says, but when, and where, and to whom he thinks and says it. A man with a flint and steel striking sparks over a wet blanket is one thing, and striking them over a tinder-box is another. The free Englishman is born under protest; he lives and dies under protest,—a tolerated but not a welcome fact. Is not *freethinker* a term of reproach in England? The same idea in the soul of an Englishman, who struggled up to it and still holds it *antagonistically*, and in the soul of an American to whom it is congenital and spontaneous, and often unrecognised save as an element blended with all his thoughts,—a natural movement like the drawings of his breath, or the beatings of his heart,—is a very different thing.'

A quasi-conservative like Mr. Seward is certainly not an appropriate parallel to Mr. Bright. Mr. Sumner would be more to the point. If Mr. Bright, after one of his tirades against the aristocracy in the House of Commons, were smitten down from behind with a leaded cane,—say by Lord John Manners,—we might admit that liberty of speech in England and America were on the same level. Mr. Martineau speculates a great deal more freely than ever Dr. Channing did. To step outside the recognised sects, we doubt whether Professor Newman has ever experienced that same complication of petty annoyances and persecutions which Theodore Parker describes in the sermons in which he gives "Some Account of his Ministry," as directed against himself in that *ὀμφαλὸς γῆς*, that centre of the universe, Boston, Mass. Mr. Holyoake, on the whole, has had an easier time of it than Elijah Lovejoy. The two thinkers who have most widely influenced cultivated English society in all ranks, Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill, are certainly not remarkable either for political or for theological orthodoxy. But our purpose is not to discuss this question with Dr. Holmes, but simply to establish, and illustrate, the ultra-Americanism which characterises him. So far from admitting with him, however, that "America is the only place where man is full-grown," we contend that in America we have not the full-grown man, but only the over-grown boy. There is the boastful self-exaggeration, the inability of taking fair measure of its capacities and attainments as compared with those of its contemporaries and predecessors, which mark a people that has not yet cut its wisdom-teeth. The products of the American mind have no mellowness; there is a crude acidity about them. With all his intensely American feeling, however, Dr. Holmes is unable to make any advance towards the creation of a specifically American literature. He no sooner puts pen to paper than he

becomes imitative. As in Washington Irving we have the revivification of the *Spectator* school of literature, as in Cooper we see only the pale and watery reflexion of Walter Scott, so in Dr. Holmes we have an American edition (expurgated) of Montaigne and Rabelais and Sterne. The modern work of English literature which the "Aristocrat" and the "Professor" at the breakfast-table at once call to mind,—as much, perhaps, in the way of contrast as in the way of resemblance,—is the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*. The broad rollicking humour and strong sense of the Scotch professor, however, are in contrast as remarkable with the somewhat thin intellectual wit of the American, as the dry toast and tea of a Boston boarding-house are to the "strong waters" and meat-suppers of Ambrose's. The divinity student and school-dame and vexed female in bombazine are the proper hearers of the wisdom of the Autocrat, as the Shepherd and Tickler are the fitting interlocutors of North. The entire absence of dramatic powers in Holmes is, however, what chiefly differentiates him from Wilson. The boarders at his breakfast-table are only so many points to which the Autocrat attaches the threads of his conversation, so many mirrors in which he is variously reflected. They exist only as they are shone upon by him. We are sorry to speak in what appears disparagement of a writer for whom we entertain a very sincere admiration; from whom the reader is sure of entertainment and of a certain amount of mental stimulus; in whom we acknowledge wit, humour, fancy—real, if not of the highest order, shrewd observations of life, if not deep insight into character, ingenious if somewhat superficial criticism on art, literature, and philosophy. We are glad to add, without any qualification, that Dr. Holmes's sympathies are always large and humane; and that the most odious of tyrannies,—always associated in those who indulge it with a deep underlying scepticism, which suspects its own truth of being a cunningly disguised lie that may be found out, the tyranny which would suppress free thought on the most stupendous of all themes,—is thoroughly hated and despised by him. Seeing life by snatches rather than seeing it whole, apprehensive of the salient points of a character rather than grasping it in its living unity, endowed, in a word, with susceptible fancy rather than with a sterling imagination, Dr. Holmes's vocation would appear not to be towards fiction. It is in fragmentary "guesses at truth," rather than in completed delineations of life and character, that his strength hitherto has seemed to lie. Whether *Elsie Venner* confirms this pre-supposition, or rather the author's doctrine, that every man has at least one novel in him, and "that he (Dr. Holmes), as an individual of the human race, could write one novel, or story, at any rate, if he would;"—which of these

alternatives is true, remains to be seen. If he has succeeded, he has furnished the best refutation of Mr. Hawthorne's notion that American life and manners do not afford materials for a romance, by doing what was pronounced impossible. *Solvitur ambulando*.

The "destiny" which is referred to in the title-page is not, we may premise, the "manifest destiny" of which we used to hear so much in connexion with America,—romance though that appears now to have become. It refers to the doctrine, very prominent in all Dr. Holmes's writings, that character, mental and moral, is largely dependent on organisation; that transmitted and congenital qualities form a determining force in life. This opinion is not peculiar to Dr. Holmes. Every man, not only of science, but of sense, holds it, with more or less limitation; and Dr. Holmes himself does not hold it altogether without limitation. In many cases, however, the limitation is held so strongly as practically to reduce the original truth to nothing; in others so slight a limitation is admitted as virtually to leave the doctrine unchecked, to drift into a materialistic fatalism. Apart from the nicely-balanced judgments of physiologists and psychologists, in the matter of truths admitted into any mind, there are some which, from a natural affinity, become operative in it, and are always present with it; they form the key by which it unlocks the secrets of character, the light in which it views nature and life, the interpretation of all mysteries. There are other truths, different of course in different persons, which, admitted in words, are practically ignored. To the former class, in the case of Dr. Holmes, belongs the doctrine of congenital qualities, coming to us by hereditary transmission. It is the clue by which he finds his way through the labyrinth. He deduces from it, as he well may, many lessons of practical wisdom, and of tender and enlarged charity. Not denying, occasionally in a sort of moral compulsion conceding, that the mind has a self-determining power, operative under fixed conditions, he soon loses sight of the self-determining power, and remembers only the fixed conditions. Character, he allows, is destiny; but organisation is character, and organisation is an affair of race and parentage and external influences, moulding the individual as clay is moulded. This is the "destiny," the "romance" of which is told in *Elsie Venner*. It is there put in a very bold and startling, and what will be to some minds repulsive, shape.

Elsie Venner is the daughter of a gentleman of wealth and culture, belonging to what the author calls the Brahmin caste of New England, and resident in the flourishing town of Rockland, lying at the foot of a mountain, which forms an important part of the scenery of the story.

"The one feature of The Mountain that shed the brownest horror

on its woods was the existence of the terrible region known as Rattlesnake Ledge, and still tenanted by those damnable reptiles, which distil a fiercer venom under our cold northern sky than the cobra himself in the land of tropical spices and poisons.

From the earliest settlement of the place, this fact had been, next to the Indians, the reigning nightmare of the inhabitants. It was easy enough, after a time, to drive away the savages; for 'a screeching Indian Divell,' as our fathers called him, could not crawl into the crack of a rock to escape from his pursuers. But the venomous population of Rattlesnake Ledge had a Gibraltar for their fortress that might have defied the siege-train dragged to the walls of Sebastopol. In its deep embrasures and its impregnable casemates they reared their families, they met in love or wrath, they twined together in family knots, they hissed defiance in hostile clans, they fed, slept, hibernated, and in due time died in peace. Many a foray had the town's-people made, and many a stuffed skin was shown as a trophy,—nay, there were families where the children's first toy was made from the warning appendage that once vibrated to the wrath of one of these 'cruel serpents.' Sometimes one of them, coaxed out by a warm sun, would writhe himself down the hill-side into the roads, up the walks that led to houses,—worse than this, into the long grass, where the bare-footed mowers would soon pass with their swinging scythes,—more rarely into houses,—and on one memorable occasion, early in the last century, into the meeting-house, where he took a position on the pulpit-stairs,—as is narrated in the 'Account of some Remarkable Providences,' &c., where it is suggested that a strong tendency of the Rev. Didymus Bean, the Minister at that time, towards the Arminian Heresy may have had something to do with it, and that the Serpent supposed to have been killed on the Pulpit-Stairs was a false show of the Dæmon's Contrivance, he having come in to listen to a Discourse which was a sweet Savour in his Nostrils, and, of course, not being capable of being killed Himself. Others said, however, that, though there was good Reason to think it was a Dæmon, yet he did come with Intent to bite the Heel of that faithful Servant,—&c.

One Gilson is said to have died of the bite of a rattlesnake in this town early in the present century. After this there was a great snake-hunt, in which very many of these venomous beasts were killed,—one in particular, said to have been as big round as a stout man's arm, and to have had no less than *forty* joints to his rattle,—indicating, according to some, that he had lived forty years, but, if we might put any faith in the Indian tradition, that he had killed forty human beings,—an idle fancy, clearly. This hunt, however, had no permanent effect in keeping down the serpent population. Viviparous creatures are a kind of specie-paying lot, but oviparous ones only give their notes, as it were, for a future brood,—an egg being, so to speak, a promise to pay a young one by and by, if nothing happen. Now the domestic habits of the rattlesnake are not studied very closely, for obvious reasons; but it is, no doubt, to all intents and purposes oviparous. Consequently it has large families, and is not easy to kill out.

In the year 184—, a melancholy proof was afforded to the inha-

bitants of Rockland that the brood which infested The Mountain was not extirpated. A very interesting young married woman, detained at home at the time by the state of her health, was bitten in the entry of her own house by a rattlesnake which had found its way down from The Mountain. Owing to the almost instant employment of powerful remedies, the bite did not prove immediately fatal; but she died within a few months of the time when she was bitten.

All this seemed to throw a lurid kind of shadow over The Mountain. Yet, as many years passed without any accident, people grew comparatively careless, and it might rather be said to add a fearful kind of interest to the romantic hill-side, that the banded reptiles, which had been the terror of the red men for nobody knows how many thousand years, were there still, with the same poison-bags and spring-teeth at the white men's service, if they meddled with them."

On the incident described in the last paragraph but one of the preceding extract, the story turns. Elsie Venner is the daughter of the lady who is bitten by the rattlesnake; she is born shortly after the accident. The poison of the reptile, however, has entered her system; a nature lower than human is grafted upon, and overshadows, and suppresses, her womanly qualities. She is a *Lamia*—a serpent. In external indications, as well as in character, this fact expresses itself. She walks with a peculiar undulation of movement. The pattern of her dress, the mode in which her scarf is twisted round her, her habit of coiling and uncoiling her gold chain about her wrist, her sibilant utterance, the power of mysterious fascination which lurks through the strange cold glitter of her eyes, and compels an involuntary obedience, perplex observers, and reveal the serpent nature to the reader, who is in the secret. She bites a playfellow in childish anger, and the wound requires to be cauterised, that it may not be mortal; when provoked, "she throws her head back, her eyes narrowing, and her forehead drawing down;" so that an observer "thought her head actually flattened itself." Round her neck is a mysterious circular mark, always concealed by a golden chain. She visits alone Rattlesnake Ledge, and exercises a mysterious ascendancy over its fearful inhabitants, saving a chance wanderer to that spot.

"Mr. Bernard walked to the mouth of the cavern or fissure and looked into it. His look was met by the glitter of two diamond eyes, small, sharp, cold, shining out of the darkness, but gliding with a smooth, steady motion towards the light and himself. He stood fixed, struck dumb, staring back into them with dilating pupils and sudden numbness of fear that cannot move, as in the terror of dreams. The two sparks of light came forward until they grew to circles of flame, and all at once lifted themselves up, as if in angry surprise. Then for the first time thrilled in Mr. Bernard's ears the dreadful sound that nothing which

breathes, be it man or brute, can hear unmoved,—the long, loud, stinging whirr, as the huge thick-bodied reptile shook his many-jointed rattle and adjusted his loops for the fatal stroke. His eyes were drawn as with magnets toward the circles of flame. His ears rung as in the overture to the swooning dream of chloroform. Nature was before man with her anæsthetics. The cat's first shake stupefies the mouse; the lion's first shake deadens the man's fear and feeling; and the *crotalus* paralyses before he strikes. He waited as in a trance,—waited as one that longs to have the blow fall, and all over, as the man who shall be in two pieces in a second waits for the axe to drop. But while he looked straight into the flaming eyes, it seemed to him that they were losing their light and terror, that they were growing tame and dull; the charm was dissolving, the numbness was passing away, he could move once more. He heard a light breathing close to his ear, and, half turning, saw the face of Elsie Venner, looking motionless into the reptile's eyes, which had shrunk and faded under the stronger enchantment of her own."

The moral qualities of this singular being are precisely correspondent. The story shows the gradual humanising of Elsie Venner, partly through the influence of a strong attachment, partly, we are left to infer, through the natural dying out of the lower nature engrafted on the higher. The physical change which the system is by some believed to have gone through in all its parts, by the time it reaches maturity, casts out the poison which had perverted it; but the struggle has been too long and protracted, and life perishes with it.

The conception of a literally brute nature in a human form is in itself by no means attractive. The idea of a reptile semiparentage is still more repulsive. In Elsie Venner we have the moral counterpart of the artistic incongruity which Horace censures when

"turpiter atrum
Desinit in piscem mulier formosa superne."

Dr. Holmes, though not vouching for the possible existence of a nature so influenced as that of his heroine, evidently inclines to believe that such a case not only might occur but has occurred. In his preface he explains himself to the following effect:

"In calling this narrative a 'romance,' the author wishes to make sure of being indulged in the common privileges of the poetic license. Through all the disguise of fiction, a grave scientific doctrine may be detected lying beneath some of the delineations of character. He has used this doctrine as a part of the machinery of his story, without pledging his absolute belief in it to the extent to which it is asserted or implied. It was adopted as a convenient medium of truth, rather than as an accepted scientific conclusion. The reader must judge for himself what is the value of various stories cited from old authors. . . . The author must be permitted, however, to say here, in his personal character, and

as responsible to the students of the human mind and body, that since this story has been in progress he has received the most startling confirmation of the possibility of the existence of a character like that which he had drawn as a purely imaginary conception in *Elsie Venner*."

We are quite incompetent to discuss the physiological basis of the story. We demur, however, to the propriety of illustrating a "grave scientific doctrine" by what may possibly be a wild and unscientific delusion; and still more to the artistic suitability of introducing into a story of prosaic modern life, abounding in Yankee vulgarisms, an incident so abnormal and unverified as that on which *Elsie Venner* hinges. Granting for the moment its possibility, granting its actuality, it still is out of place. The scenery and events, the tone and colouring of the tale, are not in keeping with it. The conception illustrates the fantastic extravagance, that lack of a controlling good taste, which mark American literature. It is "sensation writing;" the object is to startle. The best proof of this is that Dr. Holmes's serpent-woman does not excite awe, pity, or terror, but simply incredulity. *Elsie Venner*, so far as the heroine's character is concerned, has neither the verisimilitude of a story of real life, nor the instructiveness of avowed parable or allegory. Dr. Holmes is by no means the first to describe the gradual humanising of a character in which a nature lower than human predominates. Mr. Hawthorne has done so in his romance of *Transformation*. The stories of Undines and of Neckars are other instances. But these are avowedly only the mere play of a graceful or pathetic fancy, or the symbolical utterance of truths which we can detach from their exterior form. A case like that of *Elsie Venner* belongs to the morbid pathologist, and not to the novelist. To be treated with effect in fiction, it should be transferred to an age or country—to Egypt or Greece—where, in the strangeness of the surrounding scenery and costume, rites and beliefs, it would lose something of the monstrosity which attaches to it as actually presented.

The secondary characters in *Elsie Venner* are, to our mind, more happily conceived than that of the heroine. The work derives its chief value not from the "romance of destiny" which it contains, but from the glimpses which it affords us of ordinary American life in a provincial town of New England. The two ministers, Liberal and Calvinist, the Rev. Chauncy Fairweather and the Rev. Dr. Honeywood, each covertly leaning to the other's faith; Deacon Sloper and Colonel Sprowle and Mr. Silas Peckham, are, we dare say, faithful portraiture. The picture, if it be a correct one, is by no means flattering. It leaves an impression that over American society there is diffused an incurable vulgarity of speech, sentiment, and language, hard to define, but

perceptible in every word and gesture. We do not pretend that in the middle classes of an English town we should find any remarkable degree of refinement. But here there is a pervading atmosphere of good breeding, which extends to those who do not themselves possess access to the immediate sources of cultivation. Even more conclusive, however, than the genuine vulgarity of the characters whom Dr. Holmes intends to paint as vulgar, is the real vulgarity of those whom he would represent to us as well-taught and highly-bred gentlemen, of whom Mr. Bernard Langdon is the type. His utter failure in this character would seem as if the model on which it was founded was not over common. His success in delineating the Slopers and Sprowles is in remarkable contrast. In the one, probably he draws from experience, in the other, from imagination. Be this as it may, the latter have an air of reality which is entirely wanting to the former. The inference which is suggested by this, as to the condition of American society outside of the great centres of intelligence, may be unjust, but it is not unnatural.

ART. VI.—THE SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE.

Lectures on the Science of Language, delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain. By Max Müller. London: Longmans, 1861.

Letter to Baron Bunsen on the Turanian Languages. By Max Müller. Contained in vol. i. of Bunsen's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History*, or vol. iii. of his *Christianity and Mankind*. London: Longmans, 1854.

Survey of Languages. By Max Müller. London: Williams and Norgate, 1855.

If it be true that the "proper study of mankind is man," there is surely no subject which ought to engage his thoughts and rivet his attention more than that of language. View it as we may, whether as binding humanity together by the bonds of a common superiority above the brutes, or in its countless varieties affording the most reliable means of classifying the several races of humanity itself, or as giving the key to many a dark question of mythology, history, religion, or philosophy, or as unlocking for us the stores of wisdom contained in the literatures of all nations from the world's beginning, and enabling us thereby to form an intelligent estimate of the relative intellec-

tual and social position of the various nations and the successive ages,—its study will reward the student with treasures such as he could expect from few other objects of intellectual pursuit. And, in a certain sense, the study of language has always been natural to man. That is to say, before any curiosity was awakened by things lying so much apart from human interests as herbs, spiders, or snails,—before any science of natural history could arise,—there was the practical daily need of knowing how to speak correctly. The language of the infant patriarchs had to be trained into correct Hebrew, just as the nursery-language of our own day is gradually formed into correct English. And the peculiarities of pronunciation of individuals, families, or tribes, must, especially as intercourse amongst men widened, have given rise to discussion as to the right and wrong of dialectic varieties, which directed the attention even of a people ignorant of the existence of grammar to language as a fit subject of speculation. In this early age there was no literature, unless the short proverbs and ballads which might spring up from time to time in each family or tribe in its peculiar dialect, and be as rapidly forgotten, could be dignified by the name; and consequently no authority to determine the classicality of one form or the vulgarity of others, and no evidence of the historical permissibility of one form and the modern innovation of others; and consequently correctness would be determined by analogy: *thrived* would be preferred to *throve*, *brothers* to *brethren*.

But little progress would be made by this primitive speculation on language towards a Science of Language. Inasmuch as the feeling for a correct use of the nominative case rather than the accusative is inherent in human speech of whatever dialect, this question would never present itself for solution at all, and ages would pass during which people would “speak grammar without knowing it.”* The same may be said of all the other great cardinal points of grammar; and the kind of language-speculation that has been indicated would scarcely even tend towards creating *grammatical science*. The latter owes its being to the philosophers only. When the mind turns its gaze inward upon itself, and discovers that action of some sort or other is always the object of its contemplation, and that action must proceed from some one being and be executed upon some other, then it has not only laid the groundwork of logic, but of gram-

* We are aware that there are English dialects which use the pronouns *him*, *her* as nominatives; but case-distinctions have so entirely vanished from substantives in our language, that the feeling for them has been obscured, and cannot maintain the correct usage even in the pronouns. But in the dialects of languages in which the distinctions of cases is the rule, and not the exception, no such irregularities are observed.

mar too, by virtue of the correspondence between thoughts and the words that embody them. The difference between verb and substantive, between subject and predicate, between nominative and accusative, is revealed at once. Hence is produced a philosophy, or theory, of language; dealing, however, with syntax, not with grammatical forms, explaining the principles of the collocation of words *en masse*, but not at all those of the peculiar form of each word singly, and least of all the derivation of words from some hypothetical root. It is perhaps impossible to overestimate the importance of the advance made at this stage. If it leaves more to be done than it accomplishes itself, it contains the germ of all that is to follow. The differences in nature between the various parts of speech having once been discovered by the philosopher, it will be easy for the grammarian to follow on his track, and discover that they differ in form also. Whereas, if the difference in form had been first noticed, it could have been regarded only as a caprice of speech to be accepted as a fact, but from which no principle could be deduced, and, like other anomalies which the mind finds no pleasure in contemplating, would have been rapidly forgotten again. The categories of time, place, manner, motion to, motion from, having once been established as modes of thought, the grammarian will have a definite direction given to his otherwise desultory studies in tracking out every means adopted by language for the expression of these modes of thought; and thus will be discovered the use of cases and other grammatical mysteries. It is almost needless to observe that for the Western world this great advance was made by Plato and Aristotle; but so apt are we Europeans to deduce the whole of civilisation from Western sources, that it does seem necessary to observe that the Brahmanic philosophers had advanced as far, and indeed much farther, in the direction of philosophical grammar in the sixth century before Christ.

The next stage which the study of language attains is only reached through the experience gained by the comparison of two languages. This stage introduces a study and understanding of the formal part of grammar. It is hardly too much to affirm that but for the contact of the Greeks with other nations, their different conjugations of verbs, declensions of nouns, and derivation of the various parts of speech, would never have been thoroughly understood. As a foreigner reads the idiosyncrasies of our national character better than a native, so it is he who discovers the formal part of the grammar of our language by regarding it from a point outside. We may verify this from our own language. English grammars, which treat the language from a purely English point of view, either simply neglect all

mention of conjugation, or throw out verbs like *blow*, *blew*, *blown*, as irregular and not worth consideration. As their conjugation comes by nature to an Englishman, it does not occur to him that it may depend on principles which would be worth understanding. Accordingly much more may be learned from English grammars for the use of foreigners on the niceties of pronunciation, on peculiarities of conjugation, and on other points of a formal nature, than from most of those written for Englishmen. And so a far more accurate knowledge of the formal elements of the classical languages has undoubtedly been possessed by Scaliger, Casaubon, Porson, Zumpt, Madvig, and Lobeck, than by Demosthenes or Cicero. So different is conscious knowledge from native instinct. Thus the comparison of two languages brings under contemplation a totally different province of language from what would have engaged the student of either separately.

It might be supposed that, as philosophy had given the theoretical principles on which the study of language was to be founded, and as the comparison of two languages for the purpose of teaching one had laid down rules for the formal element, no further advance was possible. And, in truth, the world has been satisfied with this result from Aristotle's day to the present. The rules of form invented by the teacher of language, having regard only to the practical end of enabling us to learn the language, are merely empirical, and indicate no ultimate principle to which the various forms owe their birth; as when they tell us to add *d* to *love* if we require the past tense *loved*, but leave us in the dark as to how that little change of form can produce so great a change of meaning. And so, when these empirical rules separate what ought to be brought together,—as they do in making Corinthi, “at Corinth,” to be one case, and Carthagine, “at Carthage,” Sardibus, “at Sardes,” another; or join what ought to be separated,—as in connecting *fero* and *tuli*, *summus* and *supremus*,—these misadventures are laid to the account of the “caprice of language,” and no attempt is made to arrive at unity or simplicity in what seems to present such a tangle of inconsistencies. When the belief in the “caprice of language” has become a settled one, another stage has been reached in the study of language. A profoundly sad one is this to contemplate: it not only fails itself to advance the science of grammar, but it prevents any future advance; where the earlier age had been delighted with the discovery of law and order, it now finds only chance; every thing that does not display its reason to the most careless glance it brands as irregular. Moreover, if even the inflexion of single words displays so little consistency, how much less likely is the derivation of

one word from another likely to do so! Hence at this stage free play is given to unbounded license of etymology; where scepticism is general as to any principle of formation in languages, etymology may serve as an idle amusement, displaying more or less of ingenuity, but can yield no result, nor even produce conviction in the mind of the etymologist himself. It is, moreover, a sort of ingenuity which, as it rests upon no basis of objective truth, may quite as pleasantly be exercised in the comparison of languages known from the evidence of history and geography to be utterly unconnected, as in that of cognate dialects. When we consider that all our standard dictionaries up to the most recent times,—Forcellini, Freund, Leverett, Damm, Bailey, Johnson, Webster,—whatever be their merits in other respects, stand upon this sceptical and trifling stage in etymology, how can we wonder if etymology has received a bad name, and if an argument based on etymology would be, by nine educated persons out of ten, conceived to rest on shifting sand?

This prejudice against the etymological comparison of languages rests on so long an experience, and has taken such firm root, that it will probably take a very long time to eradicate it, although the altered method which has produced what we are justified in calling with Dr. Max Müller a Science of Language is not a creation of yesterday. But this we may very safely assert, that no event has yet occurred in this country so calculated to induce a juster view of linguistic studies than the delivery by Dr. Max Müller, before the Royal Institution, of the series of Lectures on the Science of Language which we have put at the head of our Paper. The combination of profound learning on the subject in hand, remarkable dexterity in seizing on the aptest illustrations from every department of the wide field he surveys, a well-stored mind on other subjects of human learning, a masterly intellect trained to sift evidence and trace effects to their causes, and withal an enthusiasm that would carry the reader lightly over the driest flats, and a geniality and sprightliness truly surprising,—this combination not only makes Dr. Max Müller a delightful lecturer and writer, but ensures for the science to which he chiefly devotes his great powers an acknowledgment and an interest for which it might have had long to wait. An Englishman, moreover, will willingly allow a foreigner to be an authority on the subject of language in general who has given such practical proof of his linguistic talent by the wonderful facility with which he wields the English tongue. His style is remarkable not only for its pleasant perspicuity, but for its racy English character and its freedom from even any suspicion of foreign idiom.

It was, however, this very etymological comparison of languages, the abuse of which by the empirical and sceptical school had brought etymology into contempt, which gave birth to the new Science of Language. A principle had been established which threw a new light on the subject, and gave a direction to the researches of linguists which led them to ever-expanding discoveries. This was the separation of the two elements of words, root and inflexion, and the discovery consequent thereupon that it is the inflexional system which stamps upon a language its peculiar character, and therefore determines its affinities. To the study of the Semitic dialects we doubtless owe this most fruitful discovery; for in them the identity of the inflexions, and of the whole grammatical system, is far more striking than the affinity of the roots, which, indeed, in many instances diverge very remarkably between the more distant members of the family. And Hervas (in his *Catalogo*, 1800) "proved, by a comparative list of declensions and conjugations, that Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Amharic, are all but dialects of one original language, and constitute one family of speech, the Semitic." Having once convinced himself of this principle on the field of the Semitic languages, he proceeded to apply it with success to other languages; and so we are told "he even pointed out that the terminations of the three genders in Greek *os*, *ē*, *on*, are the same as the Sanskrit *as*, *ā*, *am*."

This seems to us the life-giving principle of the modern science of language; and to the collection of vocabularies of all attainable languages of the world, for the purpose of comparison, suggested by Leibniz, and realised in the *Vocabulary* of the Empress Catherine, and the *Mithridates* of Adelung, we should assign a very secondary importance. Those vocabularies, indeed, give a most valuable, nay indispensable, store of subject-matter; but the larger the matter to be analysed, the more pressing is the need of a principle to guide the analysis. That Leibniz had discovered the principle which Hervas uses, does not appear; and we therefore, differing from Müller, prefer to regard Hervas as the father of comparative grammar. Yet in the works of Hervas, the Empress Catherine, and Adelung,

"Languages seemed to float about like islands on the ocean of human speech; they did not shoot together to form themselves into larger continents. This is a most critical period in the history of every science, and if it had not been for a happy accident, which, like an electric spark, caused the floating elements to crystallize into regular forms, it is more than doubtful whether the long list of languages and dialects enumerated and described in the works of Hervas and Adelung could long have sustained the interest of the student of languages. This electric spark was the discovery of Sanskrit. Sanskrit is the ancient

language of the Hindus. It had ceased to be a spoken language at least 300 B.C."

That which gave to Sanskrit this high importance was mainly the fact that the languages of Europe, whose relation to one another had either never been perceived or not thoroughly comprehended, stood at once in an intelligible relation to Sanskrit: the latter was the missing link which united them all. Consequently Sir William Jones, who died in 1794, writes: "No philologist could examine the Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and Celtic had the same origin with the Sanskrit. The old Persian may be added to the same family." The Sanskrit scholars have often been accused of exalting unduly the importance of Sanskrit by treating it as the primitive language of the Aryan family, rather than as collateral with the Greek, Latin, Gothic, and Slavonic. The accusation appears to us eminently unjust: Bopp and Pott generally, indeed, use the Sanskrit form of root as the oldest attainable, but frequently show reason for believing the Sanskrit form to be a corrupted one, and for adopting a Zend or a Greek form as more primitive. We notice the point here for the purpose of calling attention to the surprising correctness of the position assigned by Sir W. Jones, at a period when Sanskrit was not yet known in Europe at all, to the Sanskrit in reference to the languages of Europe. But in Europe scholars were puzzled and unwilling to accept the newly-discovered language.

"No doubt it must have required a considerable effort for a man brought up in the belief that Greek and Latin were either aboriginal languages or modifications of Hebrew, to bring himself to acquiesce in the revolutionary doctrine that the classical languages were intimately related to a jargon of mere savages; for such all the subjects of the Great Mogul were then supposed to be. . . . The most absurd arguments found favour for a time, if they could only furnish a loophole by which to escape from the unpleasant conclusion that Greek and Latin were of the same kith and kin as the language of the black inhabitants of India. The first who dared boldly to face both the facts and the conclusions of Sanskrit scholarship was the German poet, Frederick Schlegel. . . . He published in 1808 his work *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians*. . . . Schlegel was not a great scholar. Many of his statements have proved erroneous; and nothing would be easier than to dissect his essay and hold it up to ridicule. But Schlegel was a man of genius; and when a new science is to be created, the imagination of the poet is wanted even more than the accuracy of the scholar. It surely required somewhat of poetic vision to embrace with one glance the languages of India, Persia, Græcæ, Italy, and Germany, and to rivet them together by the simple name of Indo-Germanic.

This was Schlegel's work ; and in the history of the intellect it has truly been called ' the discovery of a new world.' "

A "poetic vision," however, such as that ascribed to Schlegel, may just as easily behold a scheme which is the creation of its own imagination as a real prospect ; and, by enduing the former with all the appearance and the charm of nature, may become the source of error and wasted labour to future scientific inquirers. It was Schlegel's good fortune, quite as much as his intellectual merit, that he was here striking out a path of truth ; but this was first proved by subsequent scientific inquirers : by Grimm in his *German Grammar* ; Pott in his *Etymological Researches on the Domain of the Indo-Germanic Languages* ; Pritchard *On the Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations* ; and Bopp in his *Comparative Grammar*. It is the combined result of these inquirers which enables us to speak of a science of language in a higher and a stricter sense than the term could have been used in earlier days. Let us endeavour to indicate how the study of languages has become scientific.

The Aryan family of languages (formerly called Indo-Germanic) is the most important family of inflecting languages. By this is meant that the various modifications of time, person, number, gender, fact or potentiality, or degree of comparison, which may attach to the various notions of which speech is composed, are expressed by modifications of the notional words themselves, not by distinct words ; and these modifications, generally consisting of syllables or letters added at the end, have no acknowledged separate existence, nor any signification apart from the root, which likewise lives only in union with them. Thus in Latin *ama-t*, *ama-vi-t*, *ama-vera-t*, *ama-t-ur*, *duru-s*, *dur-ior*. As the purpose for which languages are compared is to discover the mode of their formation, it is obviously essential that the oldest attainable form of each should be used ; and hence the Gothic may stand as the representative (in most respects) of the whole Germanic family, the Old Norse as that of the Scandinavian family, the Church Slavonic as that of the modern Slavonic dialects, the Russian, Polish, Bohemian, and Illyrian. The modern languages which have but little of this inflexional character, as the English, have reached this stage from a previous stage of inflexion, as can in every instance be proved. The older languages of this family—Sanskrit, Zend, Old Persian, Greek, Latin, Gothic, Old Norse, Church Slavonic, and Armenian—are, without exception, highly inflecting languages ; and, indeed, it is only very few even of the modern to which, if studied entirely apart from their historical development, we could possibly have hesitated to apply the same epithet—to wit, chiefly the English, Dutch, Celtic, and New Persian. The Aryan languages, then,

being obviously inflecting languages, there are two elements to be compared by the comparative grammarian,—the root and the inflexion. The pioneers of the science, Bopp and Pott, found the surest term of comparison to be the inflexion. It very soon became a received axiom that the unity of inflexional system presents the true evidence of the unity of origin of what we now call the Aryan family.

The stock of roots possessed by the various languages of the family is by no means identical; many original roots, found in the older languages, have become obsolete in the later ones; and many, of which there are only slight traces in the earlier, have become important and prolific in the later. Thus, as the *répertoire* of roots in no one language is absolutely coextensive with that in another, the extreme case is at least conceivable in which, despite the common origin, two languages should possess no roots in common. Yet the similarity of the inflexional system would prove the common origin of even two such languages as these; for although *words* may be imported from a foreign tongue in any numbers, yet as soon as they become naturalised they are compelled to submit to the inflexional system of the language that borrows them: thus we form the plural of *portico porticoes*, not *portici*; and we say *oration, orations*, not *oratio, orationes*. There is no example of the transference of a system of inflexions, and only very rare and peculiar cases of that of a few isolated inflexions from one language into another. To the inflexions, then, as affording the most reliable means of comparison between languages, the most scrupulous attention was directed. The following are the most important results obtained from the study of them. Anomalies of inflexions, and plurality of declensions or conjugations, are greatly reduced, and tend ultimately to disappear through the comparison of the various related languages. Our grammars tell us of three declensions in Greek and five in Latin, and we are left to wonder why the one language has thus split itself into three or five, adopting a plurality of methods for the expression of one relation. As this appearance of eccentricity or diversity encourages the ever-ready conception of the caprice of language, so the discovery that this diversity is the product of an earlier unity contributes a most important element towards the establishment of a science of language. This discovery is entirely the work of comparative grammar: until comparative grammar teaches us that λέγω, λέγεις, λέγει, stands for λέγ-ωμι, λέγ-εσι, λέγ-ετι, we shall never think of regarding that conjugation as identical with that of έσ-μι, εις (for έσ-σι), έσ-τι; and when the inflexion of the Latin dative singular is discovered to be *i, ulli* ceases to be a mere un instructive anomaly, and becomes as genuine a repre-

sentative of the original *ullo-i* as *servo* of *servo-i*.* A second result of the comparison of the inflexional system of the Aryan languages is the analysis of these inflexions, and the discovery of the compound nature of many of them. Much of this is evident even to an intelligent study of one language: the inflexions of *leg-o-r*, *leg-ît-ur*, *leg-im-ur*, *leg-unt-ur*, are seen to be compound, adding to the active forms *lego*, *legît*, *legimus*, *legunt*, the *r* indicative of passivity. But much would never be understood without the light shed by other languages, or would be misunderstood; for example, a classical scholar would probably divide *τύπτο-μαι*, and regard *μαι* as the sign of passivity; whereas the comparative grammarian, who knows that the *μ* originally belonged to the active also (*τύπτωμι*), understands that the passive force lies in the lengthening of the active *ι* into *αι*: Active, (*τύπτωμι*) *τύπτω*, (*τύπτεσι*) *τύπτεϊς*, (*τύπτεϊ*) *τύπτεϊ*; Passive, *τύπτομαι*, (*τύπτεσθαι*) *τύπτη*, *τύπτεται*. The Sanskrit makes this plain: Active, *bôdhâmi*, *bôdhasi*, *bôdhati*; Atmanepadam (corresponding with the Greek passive), *bôdhê* (for *bôdhamê*), *bôdhasê*, *bôdhatê*. A third result of the comparison of the inflexional system of many languages is that the origin of many inflexions is revealed to us. In the terminations of the Sanskrit *bôdhâ-mi*, *bôdha-si*, *bôdha-ti*, we recognise the stems of the three personal pronouns *με*, *σε*, *το*, in a way which was not possible in the Greek *τύπτω*, *τύπτεϊς*, *τύπτεϊ*; yet the Sanskrit alone is not always sufficient for this purpose, for the first person of the passive is there *bôdhê*; and only the comparison of the Greek *τύπτομαι* shows us that this stands for *bôdhamê*. So in the declension of nouns the Greek nominative *μήτηρ* shows us that the Sanskrit *mâtâ* stands for *mâtâr*.

It has been shown how the relationship of languages is proved with far more certainty from this inflexional system than from their roots. The examination of the inflexional system likewise lets us into more of the arcana of languages that constitute its genius. But when the Aryan family had once been established, it became important to compare its roots also; and this comparison has yielded many important results.

First among these must be placed the discovery of the principles of the changes of letters on passing from one language into another. Every one knows that *t*, *d*, and *th* are related

* Thus the anomalies of one language frequently connect themselves with the ordinary practice of another older language, and thereby cease to be, in fact, anomalies at all. Thus, if the additions to the root in *ΣΚΕΑ δννυ-μι*, *ΛΑΜΒ-άνω*, *δὲ ΔΩ-μι*, *CER-n-o* surprise us, we find that in Sanskrit the tenses indicating continuity (the present and imperfect, as opposed to the past aorist, the perfect, and the future) are almost invariably distinguished by such enlargement; and once having recognised it as a sign of continuity, we lose the common schoolboy's temptation to form the futures *λάμψω*, *διδάσω*, &c.

letters; and no one hesitates, therefore, to refer the German *tochter* and *dorn* to the same origin as the English *daughter* and *thorn*; yet most persons would deem it more regular and more satisfactory if the German words were *dochter* and *thorn*. But the comparative grammarian knows that every *t* in a High-German root corresponds to a *d* in a Low-German or English, and every *d* to a *th*; and consequently the words are really more regular in their unlikeness than they would be if they were more like. But the importance of this rule is greatly enhanced when it is found to be only a part of a larger one, according to which the German tenuis, media, and aspirate mutes correspond respectively to the English media, aspirate, and tenuis; thus—

German .	<i>pf</i> or <i>f</i> ,	<i>ch</i> ,	<i>z</i> or <i>sz</i>		<i>b</i> ,	<i>g</i> ,	<i>d</i>		<i>p</i> ,	<i>k</i> ,	<i>t</i> .
English .	<i>p</i> ,	<i>k</i> ,	<i>t</i> ,		<i>f</i> or <i>v</i> ,	<i>y</i> or <i>gh</i> ,	<i>th</i> ,		<i>b</i> ,	<i>g</i> ,	<i>d</i> .

Similar principles regulate the relation of Sanskrit to Zend, Sanskrit to Greek, &c. It is obvious that the recognition of these principles lends us powerful assistance in the search for the origin of words of unknown etymology; and an etymology found by this method is no longer (what all etymologies used to be) a happy guess, but a self-evident application of a principle.

A second result of the comparison of the roots of many languages is, that we find reason for supposing a simpler form of root as the original, and this again frequently shows us that a root we had supposed primitive is only a derivative from a simpler one; and thus the number of roots is materially reduced. Thus the Greek language itself contains nothing to prove *διδάσκω* a derivative word—it forms the derivative *διδάσκαλος* without abbreviation of stem; but the comparison of *disco* shows the *di* to be merely a reduplicating syllable, and the perfect *didici*, which enables us to recognise *disco* as standing for *dic-sco*, shows us also *διδάσκω* as a collateral form of the root (*δικ*) of *δείκνυμι*. The Latin grammarian would regard the root of *jungo*, *junxi*, *junctum*, as *jung*; but the comparison of the Sanskrit root *yug* and the Greek *ζεύγνυμι*, *ζεύξω*, shows him that it is *jug*. The German *binden* always retains the *n*; yet the Sanskrit *badh* shows that it is not primitive.

Such are some of the results obtained by the comparison of the Aryan languages, the tendency of which is obviously to bring order into what was a chaos, to show that principles are at work where only caprice had been seen before. In so far language is elevated to the rank of a science.

This point being settled, the next question is, what sort of a science is it? Dr. Müller expends much labour to convince us that language is strictly a *physical* science, like zoology or

botany; that it grows and changes entirely independently of the will of man, being governed by laws which are not under his control; that "although a poet may knowingly and intentionally invent a new word, its acceptance depends on circumstances which defy individual interference." He appears to us here to mingle things which should be kept distinct. In speaking of the *growth* and *changes* of a language, he is speaking of the inflexional system; this undoubtedly, having been originally not consciously invented, but blindly evolved, is changed from time to time by an instinct rather than with a purpose, and therefore is removed away from the mental sciences. The invention of new words, on the other hand, stands on a different footing, and is a conscious act, and the acceptance is no less a conscious act; and they consequently belong to human, not to natural history. We have seen the word "telegram,"—lately invented by a newspaper, because it was found convenient, and its analogy to *diagram*, *anagram*, *program*, seemed to justify it,—meet with universal acceptance.* And it is also essential to notice that the two processes here mentioned belong to entirely different stages of society, and that the one excludes the other; the change of the inflexional system belonging to a period destitute of literature, and when men spoke with as little consciousness of the principles of the process as they breathed; but the invention and acceptance of new words, and the establishment of old words in peculiar significations, belonging to an age of literature, when the practice of individuals does influence the language very considerably: witness Homer, Luther, Shakspere, Johnson, Carlyle. But about the former Müller is quite in the right; and it is important to understand this clearly, since only on this hypothesis can we expect to find language, in the changes of its inflexional system, conforming to laws as clear and as binding as those of chemistry.

It will be observed that the scientific comparison of languages originated, and has at present been successfully prosecuted, on one field only—that of the Aryan languages; and that there the feature which gives character and expression to the language, and which yields the most reliable data for comparison among various idioms, is the inflexional system. When we attempt to push the experience thus gained into other fields, however, and to determine the mutual relationship of the outlying languages, we are met by the difficulty that most of these have no

* Lest we should be supposed to intend to justify this formation, we will remind the reader that "telegraph" is from the adjective form *τηλεγράφος*, "writing afar" (like *τηλεμάχος*, *τηλεσκόπος*, *τηλεβόλος*), and that "a thing written from afar, telegraphed," must be either *τηλέγραφον* (proparox.) or *τηλεγράφημα* (cf. *τηλεβολέω*): whereas *τηλεγράφω*, and therefore *τηλέγραμμα*, are quite impossible forms.

inflexional system at all, at least not in the same sense. The morphological classification of languages as isolating, agglutinative, and inflexional, established by William Humboldt, is thus explained by Müller.

"As all languages, so far as we can judge at present, can be reduced in the end to roots, predicative and demonstrative, it is clear that, according to the manner in which roots are put together, we may expect to find three kinds of languages, or three stages in the gradual formation of speech.

1. Roots may be used as words, each root preserving its full independence.

2. Two roots may be joined together to form words, and in these compounds one root may lose its independence.

3. Two roots may be joined together to form words, and in these compounds both roots may lose their independence.

"The first stage, in which each root preserves its independence, and in which there is no formal distinction between a root and a word, I call the *Radical Stage*. This stage is best represented by ancient Chinese. Languages belonging to this first or radical stage have sometimes been called *Monosyllabic* or *Isolating*. The second stage, in which two or more roots coalesce to form a word, the one retaining its radical independence, the other sinking down to a mere termination, I call the *Terminational Stage*. This stage is best represented by the Turanian family of speech; and the languages belonging to it have generally been called *agglutinative*, from *gluten*, glue. The third stage, in which roots coalesce so that neither the one nor the other retains its substantive independence, I call the *Inflexional Stage*. This stage is best represented by the Aryan and Semitic families, and the languages belonging to it have sometimes been distinguished by the name of *organic* or *amalgamating*."

In his earlier work on the Turanian languages Dr. Müller had thus happily indicated the difference between the two last stages:

"The difference is the same as between a compositor and a reader. The compositor puts the *s* to the end of a word and looks on the type *s* in his hand as producing the change of *pound* into *pounds*. To the reader the *s* has no separate existence (except on scientific reflection); the whole word expresses to him the modified idea, and in his perception the same change is produced by *penny* and *pence* as by *pound* and *pounds*."

This classification being morphological, it may or may not tally with the genealogical or historical classification,—that is, there may be many families of languages historically entirely unconnected, which nevertheless all conform to the same type of formation,—say the agglutinating type or the inflexional type. And, on the other hand, it is conceivable that a language of the second stage should be developed out of one of the first,

and that one of the third should be developed out of one of the second; and so the genealogical families would overstep the limits of the morphological. This latter hypothesis is, indeed, in the highest degree probable. For the distinct word, which in the isolating languages indicates relation (as when by juxtaposition of *üő*, house, and *li*, interior, in Chinese, *üő-li* is employed to denote "at home"), easily loses its accent, and sinks down into a mere termination; and thus the language becomes an agglutinative one: thus *üőli*, if *li* be treated as a mere affix, is precisely similar to *Becsben*, "at Vienna," in Hungarian (an agglutinating language), where *ben* appended denotes *in*. And as in the agglutinating languages the root, which theoretically ought always to maintain itself perfectly sharp and distinct, unaffected by the addition of any affixes, tends with time to accommodate itself to these, and thereby to give up its separate existence, the language tends to become inflexional. These are not merely theoretical possibilities; they are, in some instances, ascertained facts.

"Though each language, as soon as it once becomes settled, retains that morphological character which it had when it first assumed its individual or national existence, it does not lose altogether the power of producing grammatical forms that belong to a higher stage. In Chinese, and particularly in Chinese dialects, we find rudimentary traces of agglutination. The *li* which I mentioned before as the sign of the locative has dwindled down to a mere postposition; and a modern Chinese is no more aware that *li* meant originally 'interior' than the Turanian is of the origin of his case-terminations. In the spoken dialects of Chinese agglutinative forms are of more frequent occurrence. Thus in the Shanghai dialect *wo* is, 'to speak,' as a verb; *woda*, 'a word.' Of *woda* a genitive is formed, *woda-ka*; a dative, *pela woda*; an accusative, *tang woda*. In agglutinative languages, again, we meet with rudimentary traces of inflexion. Thus in Tamil the root *tīngu*, to sleep, has not retained its full integrity in the derivative *tūkkam*, sleep."

We may advance a step farther, and affirm that this growth of an isolating language into an agglutinative, and of an agglutinative into an inflexional, affords the only satisfactory explanation of the rise of the two latter classes. One of the first achievements of Aryan comparative grammar was the establishment of a connexion between the inflexions of person and the corresponding pronouns, and between those of tense and mood, and certain auxiliary verbs. The inflexions of *ἐσ-μι*, *ἐσ-σι*, *ἐσ-τι*, are obviously connected with the pronouns *με*, *σε*, *το*. The *σ* that forms the future in *δώσω* is the root *εσ*, to be; and the older Attic forms *φενξοῦμαι*, and still more the Doric *πραξιόμεν*, preserve the original Sanskrit *syāmi*, *syāmas*, in all its purity, in which, moreover, the syllable *yā* (which is also used in the formation of the potential *dadyām*, and becomes *η* in Greek,

δοῖν) is the root *yā*, to go (like *je vais dire*, I am going to say, *amatum iri*). The *d* that forms the aorist, *I loved*, is the root of the verb *to do*, as appears clearly from the inflexions of the Anglo-Saxon *ner-ē-de*, *ner-ē-dest*, *ner-ē-de*, *ner-ē-don*, *ner-ē-don*, *ner-ē-don* (I nourished), compared with *dide*, *didest*, *dide*, *didon*, *didon*, *didon* (I did), but still more from the plural of the Gothic verb *to nourish*,—*nas-i-dédum*, *nas-i-dédup*, *nas-i-dédun* (where the inflexion retains the reduplication of 'I did'). The *b* of *ama-bo*, *ama-bam*, is the root of the verb *bhū*, to be, in Sanskrit, which gives us *fui* in Latin. The augment denoting past time (Sanskrit *a*, Greek *ε*) is probably the Sanskrit demonstrative root *a*, transferring the action *yonder*, away from the present. The syllable *ya*, which forms the passive in Sanskrit (with which may be compared the *e* of *pendeo*, *veneo*), is from the root *yā*, to go. These instances might be multiplied so as to cover nearly the whole field of inflexion. Now this similarity between the inflexions and separate pronouns or verbs can only be adequately accounted for by supposing a primitive composition of words precisely after the manner of the agglutinative languages, and that subsequently that more perfect fusion of the two words into one took place which is the characteristic of the inflecting languages.* If this be the history of the elaborate inflexional system which we find at the earliest period to which we can trace back the Aryan languages,—in the Vedic Sanskrit at 1500 B.C.,—how many ages must we assume during which the earlier agglutinative language was developing this inflexional language? and how many earlier still till we can reach the original monosyllabic or isolating stage? Truly the study of comparative grammar tends to modify our conceptions of the antiquity of the history of man, in the same way as geology deals with that of the earth's crust.

To return to the point we were discussing, viz. the classification of the agglutinative languages. Dr. Müller, in another work, has devoted much learning to this subject. He admits that on many whole groups of dialects we have as yet scarcely any information; yet he thinks that enough is known to warrant us in assigning a common origin to all languages bearing this general character; and he consequently calls them by the common name "Turanian." He shows how little similarity could *a priori* be looked for among languages which, although spring-

* The only other hypothesis would be that the inflexional stage is the older, and that the separate pronouns, &c. had been formed by lopping off the inflexions, and treating them as words. We should not have thought that this idea, which is confuted by the invariable greater fullness of the separate pronouns, and by the distincter notion of action embodied in the separate verbs "to go," &c., could be entertained by any sane man, had it not been propounded by the late accomplished scholar M. Fauriel, and by Rapp.

ing from the same original centre, have diverged so far as to the shores of the Arctic Sea on the one hand, and to Malacca, South Africa, and the islands of the Pacific on the other, and for whose dissemination, therefore, a vastly longer period must be assumed than for the Aryan. And he shows how the peculiar genius of these languages causes them to diverge much more rapidly than is the case in the inflexional languages. For where the root and the relational affix are kept apart so carefully as in the languages in question, the consciousness of each as a separate word never dies, and of two synonymous affixes, one dialect may choose the one, and another the other; and where this extends over the whole relation between the languages, there may be in a few generations no similarity in the relational words to attest the common origin. And inasmuch as these languages are very copious, and one tribe adopts one of a number of synonymous roots, and another adopts another to more familiar use, and the neglected words gradually die out, a comparatively short time of separation may efface most of the radical affinities also. When it is further remembered that these languages are chiefly spoken by tribes such as the Mongols, Tatars, and Huns, which rose and fell rapidly, generally led a nomad life, had little intercourse with the world beyond their tribe, and no history or literature to fix the language at one point and prevent further changes, sufficient reasons are presented to account for a vastly wider divergency than we find in the Aryan languages, which have generally been spoken by settled nations, and whose earliest accessible language is a literary one. If, then, we admit neither the root nor the relational affixes as means of comparison, but conceive it possible for languages to have a common origin in which neither of these display any common features, what is left upon which we can base our argument for community of origin? Dr. Müller relies upon the agglutinative character itself. And so, when he has satisfied himself that this is the character of the languages of Japan, of Malacca, or of Polynesia, he unhesitatingly includes these in his great Turanian family. Yet if we accept the idea previously explained, that the three classes of isolating, agglutinative, and inflexional languages are not generically distinct, but are rather three *stages*, which may be run through in succession by the descendants of one race, it is manifest that the common agglutinative character creates not even a presumption of community of origin, but is equivalent only to a declaration of the languages standing on the same level of civilization. And that Dr. Müller still holds to the idea of those three classes being not generically distinct, is evident from his calling them the radical *stage*, terminational *stage*, &c.

The fact seems to us to be, that the larger the number of

the languages which we are comparing together, and the looser their possible mutual connexion, the *more* scrupulous must be our attention to every misgiving that might force itself upon us; since where, with our imperfect knowledge, a misgiving arises, completer knowledge would probably array a whole army of arguments against us. Let us remember in the first place what elements are common to all language, and beware lest we use any of these as arguments for community of origin between individual languages. All language is produced by the agency of tongue, palate, teeth, and lips, and consequently the same sounds will recur in all. And let us not even suppose that the predominance of a certain class of peculiar sounds constitutes any argument for common origin; for this is found to be mainly the natural effect of climate; mountain idioms being harsher, producing their sounds deeper in the throat, whilst coast idioms are smoother, producing theirs at the front of the mouth with the teeth and lips. Again, if we admit that any words designating sounds, or that which produces a sound, are formed by a literal reproduction of the sound itself (*onomatopœia*), the identity of these words furnishes no argument for relationship between languages, inasmuch as each may have taken the word separately. The word *cuckoo* is an example. Again, as the first syllables that are possible to the lips of the infant are, from physical causes, the same all the world over,* it need not surprise us if many words out of the simple infantine vocabulary of languages from every part of the world bear a certain similarity. Again, when we remember what fundamental notions are with us sometimes expressed by borrowed words (of French or Latin origin), we shall be advised to be very cautious how we determine the affinities of a language upon the evidence of a few words.† Again, coincidence even in a very peculiar and idiomatic mode of expression, which might appear even to the cautious linguist as an argument for affinity, is by no means always so. This will appear in an example. There are several tribes in Africa which express the numerals by counting on the fingers and toes: up to five on the left hand, up to ten on the right hand, then on the feet for the numbers up to twenty; thus "a complete left hand" denotes five, "a complete right hand" ten, "a whole man" twenty, "two whole men" forty, and so on.

* "The simplest articulations, and those which are readiest caught by the infant mouth, are the syllables formed by the vowel *a* with the primary consonants of the labial and dental classes, especially the former: *ma, ba, pa, na, da, ta*. Out of these, therefore, is very generally formed the limited vocabulary required at the earliest period of infant life, comprising the names for father, mother, infant, breast, food." Wedgwood's *Dictionary of English Etymology*, s. v. *Babe*.

† Uncle, aunt, cousin, nephew, niece; face, palate, voice, stomach; air, mountain, valley; and even numerals, as second, dozen.

But when we find that the Greenlanders do the very same, it is obvious that we cannot derive the African practice from the Greenlandish, or *vice versâ*, but must regard each as the product of a natural (and therefore universal) impulse to use those limbs which we possess in greatest number for the expression of number in general. Again, when we remember how often, in languages of which we can trace the history, words which look like one another, and would unhesitatingly have been cited as evidence of affinity between the languages in which they occur, are seen by the light of their older forms to have nothing to do with one another, we shall learn a lesson of caution when dealing with languages of which we only know the present (possibly very degraded) condition.* And, lastly, as to this new argument for community of origin from similarity of grammatical system only (without community either of root or of affixes), how little it is worth is seen most forcibly in the case of the Basque. This ancient language, which was spoken in the same locality by the ancient Iberians, has so peculiar a construction that W. von Humboldt formed a fourth class for it, which he called the Polysynthetic. It bears the most striking similarity in these very points to the native American languages, which Humboldt included in the same morphological division. Yet who will dare to affirm their community of origin?

It is, then, our conviction that community of origin can never be proved except by the method which has been so successful in the Aryan family. Though both roots and affixes may change very rapidly in nomad languages, and real affinities be from this cause obscured, yet we have no confidence in any other system of comparison than that which attends to these fundamental elements of language. It will be necessary to know far more than we do at present of the history of the various languages, and to understand the relations of the languages of each smaller group among themselves,† before we can expect much fruit from

* e.g. Sp. *matar* (to slay) has nothing to do with Heb. מָתַת, *môth*, but is from Lat. *maculare*. The Egyptian Horus (although a solar deity) is not the Persian *Khôr* (the sun), for the latter is known to be from the Sanskrit *sūrya*. The Hebrew *Jehovah* (of which the correct pronunciation is believed to be 'Jahveh') has often (e.g. in Pope's "Universal Prayer," and by Gesenius) been compared with the Latin *Jove*; although the latter has lost an initial *d*, the restoration of which in the Sanskrit *Dyau*, and Greek *Zeus* (ζ being = *dy*), destroys the similarity which tempted to connect them.

† If the mutual relations of the various Teutonic languages had not been previously understood, so that the comparative grammarian could at once select Gothic, Old High German, and Old Norse, as the most satisfactory representatives of the family, how imperfectly might the position of this great family among the Aryan languages have been understood! Fancy that Dutch or English had been used instead. Or, to take another case, the Aryan character of modern Persian could scarcely have been recognised but for previous examination of the Iranian languages which linked it to the old Persian, Pehlevi, and Zend.

the endeavour to class these groups as shoots from one parent stem. The Aryan method of comparison fails when tried upon the agglutinative languages *en gros*, not from inherent inapplicability, but from the insufficiency of our knowledge of these, if not from the absence of the relationship we are trying to establish.

All these questions about the mutual relations of various families of languages, however uninteresting they be in themselves to many minds, have a certain universal interest from their connection with the problem of the common origin, and the original common language, of mankind. If an *original* community of language could be proved, it would indeed prove community of origin; yet even if all existing languages could be shown to diverge from one common type, how should we prove this to be the *original* language? It might be the language of conquerors, which had displaced and survived numerous previous idioms. But we have already expressed our belief that the day is far distant when any thing of this sort shall be possible. On the other hand, an original diversity of language is by no means inconsistent with the common origin, provided that by the expression "common origin" we do not insist on understanding the origin from a single pair, but understand simultaneous creation, in whatever numbers, with similar physical and mental faculties.* On these grounds we do not expect that much light will be thrown by the progress of linguistic science upon the very earliest ages of human history; nor certainly that the "one primeval language," which some scholars, more hasty than sound, imagine they have disinterred, will ever be known to cautious and impartial judges.

Theoretical considerations on the origin of language may, however, clear and elevate our ideas. Whether the human race was created in one pair or in many, whether the earth has been peopled from one centre or from many, man has every where learned to speak; and, we may ask, what is speech, and how does he come by it? Müller's concluding chapter on this subject is one of the best reasoned in the book. For brutes he claims "sensation, perception, memory, will, and intellect, only we must restrict intellect to the comparing or interlacing of single perceptions."

In other words,

"brutes see, hear, taste, smell, and feel; that is to say, they have five

* Lest those who allow themselves to be biased in purely scientific problems by impressions derived from the Bible should unduly stigmatize this view as unbiblical, let us notice that it is that of the first of the two accounts of the creation (Gen. i. 1—ii. 4), where man is created just as all the other animals had been; a noun which in the singular has a collective meaning being in each case used, and being afterwards referred to by a *plural* pronoun (vv. 26-29), manifestly with the idea of the creation of a multitude of individuals in order to establish the species

senses, just like ourselves, neither more nor less. They have both sensation and perception. . . . Brutes have sensations of pleasure and pain. . . . Brutes do not forget, or, as philosophers would say, brutes have memory. . . . Brutes are able to compare and to distinguish. . . . Brutes have a will of their own. . . . Brutes show signs of shame and pride. . . . Brutes show signs of love and hatred."

And,

"if we tear a spider's web, and see the spider examining the mischief that is done, and either giving up his work in despair, or endeavouring to mend it as well as may be, surely here we have the instinct of weaving controlled by observation, by comparison, by reflection, by judgment ;"

to which the name of intellect may be unhesitatingly applied. Yet, with all these faculties, brutes have not language.

"Man speaks, and no brute has ever uttered a word. Language is our Rubicon, and no brute will dare to cross it. This is our matter-of-fact answer to those who speak of development, who think they discover the rudiments at least of all human faculties in apes, and who would fain keep open the possibility that man is only a more favoured beast, the triumphant conqueror in the primeval struggle for life."

Now to what mental difference does this outward difference correspond? Müller answers in the words of Locke :

"If it may be doubted whether beasts compound and enlarge their ideas that way to any degree ; this, I think, I may be positive in, that the power of abstracting is not at all in them, and that the having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes, and is an excellency which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain to."

Now precisely these general ideas are the basis of language.

"After we had explained every thing in the growth of language that can be explained, there remained in the end, as the only inexplicable residuum, what we called *roots*."

These roots, although in highly complex languages, as Greek or Sanskrit, they are so constantly loaded with various inflexional syllables as never to appear in their bare form at all, nevertheless were originally used as words, and are so used in languages of simpler organization. They appear both as verbs and as substantives, the context determining which is intended. English words such as *fear* and *sleep* show how this is possible. But what is important to our present purpose is to notice that the notion of an *act* (*i. e.* the verbal sense) always precedes that of a *being* (the substantive sense), and that the root, indicating an act, can only be transferred to a being inasmuch as the being is either subject, or object, or instrument of the act. Thus *man*

is "the thinker," and all *beings* (understanding by this term both personal and impersonal existences) can only in this way receive designations at all, viz. in consequence of some previously noticed action characteristic of them. That this is so may be verified by the language of children, who, till they have advanced a stage in knowledge of the English language, call a cow a "moo," a sheep a "ba," from the sound uttered by each. Now what is this but affirming that that very abstraction which we saw to be the distinction between man and brute is the basis of language? The verb is the general, the substantive the particular; and the verb is the fundamental, the substantive the derived. That the verb is the general is obvious; from the general idea "to cover" how many particular ideas may be individualized! First, any thing that covers—a lid, a thatch, the arch of heaven, a hat, a cloak, the skin, and countless others; secondly, that which is covered—a house, a box, and many others. If we could suppose each of these things to have received its designation arbitrarily, and not from a perception of its "covering" property, language would become an impossibility, from the enormous extent of the stock-in-trade with which it would have to start. Instead of the single root 'to cover,' it would have required perhaps twenty distinct names, with the further disadvantage that, as these names had been created as mere arithmetical ciphers, expressing no quality and no action, neither they nor any derivative formed from them could be used to express any other object which the generalizing faculty associated with the former. In opposition to this, the growth of language into an incalculable copiousness is a very intelligible result of the constant action of the generalizing faculty; and the original stock of verbal roots required is very small. For, to take examples, *to walk*, *to run*, *to go*, *to rush*, might be expressed by the same root, with variations indicating the difference of intensity in the act; and the same may be said of *to look*, *to see*, *to gaze*, *to stare*; *to hear*, *to listen*; *to touch*, *to strike*, *to maul*. Again, *to set* may be expressed, as in English, by a derivative (causative) from *to sit*, *to fell* from *to fall*, &c. Hence the problem of the origin of language reduces itself to an inquiry into the origin of a small number (Müller says 400 or 500) of roots of a general or verbal signification.

Among these we cannot refrain from asking, "How was the abstract idea of measuring expressed by *mā*, the idea of thinking by *man*? How did *gā* come to mean 'going,' *sthā* 'standing,' *sad* 'sitting,' *dā* 'giving,' *mar* 'dying,' *char* 'walking,' *kar* 'doing'?"

The origin of these roots was explained by many philosophers on the theory of onomatopœia (wittily and express-

ively called by Müller the Bow-wow theory), which he thus states and refutes:

"It is supposed that man, being as yet mute, heard the voices of birds and dogs and cows, the thunder of the clouds, the roaring of the sea, the rustling of the forest, the murmurs of the brook, and the whisper of the breeze. He tried to imitate these sounds; and finding his mimicking cries useful as signs of the objects from which they proceeded, he followed up the idea, and elaborated language." "Our answer is, that though there are names in every language formed by mere imitation of sound, yet these constitute a very small proportion of our dictionary. They are the playthings, not the tools, of language, and any attempt to reduce the most common and necessary words to imitative roots ends in complete failure." "There are of course some names, such as *cuckoo*, which are clearly formed by an imitation of sound. But words of this kind are, like artificial flowers, without a root. They are sterile, and are unfit to express any thing beyond the one object which they imitate."

The number of objects, indeed, which could receive their designation in this way is very small. Examples chosen to illustrate it are nearly always the names of animals which utter some well-known cry, or else bells, drums, or the like, the characteristic feature of which is the sound. But if language, which is sound, can only imitate, it obviously has no means of expressing the objects of any sense but that of hearing, nor any act but that of sounding; and only one verb is possible, viz. "to sound." And as we have found the verbal idea to be the primitive, this theory manifestly falls to the ground at once, since none of the essential and fundamental ideas—"to go," "to stand," "to see," "to strike," "to hold"—could possibly receive their designation by it. In truth, however, the words formed on this principle betray themselves at once in most languages as exceptional words, and so proclaim the Bow-wow theory *not* to be the correct one for the great body of the language. They generally find it necessary to declare their imitative character by reduplication of the root: thus, in the designations of sounds in Chinese given by Müller, "the cock crows, *kiao kiao*; the wild-goose cries, *kao kao*; the wind and rain sound, *siao siao*; bells sound, *tsiang tsiang*," &c. And so in the Aryan languages: *κόκκυξ*, *cuculus*, cuckoo; Germ. *Uhu*, Lat. *ulula*, the owl; *ἑπτοψ*, *tintinnabulum*; *turtur*; and in languages of quite different origin, as in Galla, *bilbila*, a bell.

This theory being inadequate to the explanation of the origin of the great body of roots, the Interjectional (styled by Müller the Pooh-pooh) theory is stated and rejected:

"Does not man utter cries, and sobs, and shouts, according as he is affected by fear, pain, or joy? These cries or interjections were re-

presented as the natural and real beginnings of human speech." "But these interjections are only the outskirts of real language. Language begins where interjections end. There is as much difference between a real word, such as 'to laugh,' and the interjection 'ha, ha!' between 'I suffer' and 'oh,' as there is between the involuntary act and noise of sneezing and the verb 'to sneeze.'"

Both these theories were more popular formerly, before the rise of comparative grammar, than they ever can be with those who understand the achievements of this science. For the chief temptation to them was given by an apparent expressiveness in the sounds themselves of which many words are composed; and this expressiveness frequently vanishes altogether when the word is traced to its etymon.

"Who does not imagine that he hears in the word 'thunder' an imitation of the rolling and rumbling noise which the old Germans ascribed to their god Thor playing at ninepins? Yet . . . the root is *tan*, to stretch. In Sanskrit the sound 'thunder' is expressed by the same root *tan*; but in the derivatives *tanyu*, *tanyatu*, and *tanayitnu*, thundering, we perceive no trace of the rumbling noise which we imagine we perceived in the Latin *tonitru* and the English *thunder*. The same root *tan*, to stretch, yields some derivatives which are any thing but rough and noisy. The English *tender*, the French *tendre*, the Latin *tener*, are derived from it." "Who does not imagine that he hears something sweet in the French *sucré*, *sucré*? Yet sugar came from India, and it is there called '*sarkhara*, which is any thing but sweet-sounding."

And so with regard to the Interjectional theory:

"It is said that the idea of disgust takes its rise in the senses of smell and taste, in the first instance probably in smell alone; that in defending ourselves from a bad smell we are instinctively impelled to screw up the nose, and to expire strongly through the compressed and protruded lips, giving rise to a sound represented by the interjections 'faugh! foh! fie!'. From this interjection it is proposed to derive not only such words as *foul* and *filth*, but, by transferring it from natural to moral aversion, the English *fiend*, the German *Feind*. If this were true, we should suppose that the expression of contempt was chiefly conveyed by the aspirate *f*, by the strong emission of the breathing with half-opened lips. But *fiend* is a participle from a root *fian*, to hate, in Gothic *fijan*; and as a Gothic aspirate always corresponds to a tenuis in Sanskrit, the same root in Sanskrit would at once lose its expressive power. It exists in fact in Sanskrit as *piy*, to hate, to destroy; just as *friend* is derived from a root which in Sanskrit is *prî*, to delight."

So far the result obtained is purely negative; and it might be said, "If this is all you linguists can do, you leave us in a worse state of ignorance respecting the origin of language than

we were in before: you pull down the theories which we had carefully built up, and which based language on faculties which actually do prompt man to utterances bordering on language,—the power of imitation, and the sensations of fear, joy, and pain,—and you give us nothing in their place.” If this were strictly true, it would nevertheless be a great advance towards knowledge to have proved that these two theories of “Bow-wow” and “Pooh-pooh” are contradicted by facts as regards the great body of a language. For they really sink the first men to the condition of brutes. Brutes have the imitative faculty, which is the essence of “Bow-wow,” and experience the same sensations which produce “Pooh-pooh.” But whereas brutes perceive individual things, man perceives first what is general (verbal ideas), under which he ranges the various individual things that attract his notice, and names them accordingly. Why the primitive Aryan said *gā* for ‘to go,’ *sthā* for ‘to stand,’ and not *vice versā*, we cannot explain fully, this must be confessed; we regard these syllables not as imitative, nor as an involuntary outburst of feeling occasioned by the act of going or standing, but as signs which have been acknowledged and accepted to designate these acts. That man should speak is a necessary consequence of his thinking; and it is utterly unphilosophical to imagine a period of mutism, during which his thoughts had not yet found any means of communication, or were gradually elaborating a language. It is even contrary to evidence; for we know that if an Englishman find himself cast on a desert island with a savage, where each is absolutely necessary to the other, a medium of communication will soon be established. In such a case, it is a chance which language will be adopted: if the savage catches at the meaning of the Englishman’s verb ‘to go’ before the latter has discovered the savage’s equivalent to it, the English word will be adopted by both; and if at the same time the Englishman has found out the word used by his companion for ‘to eat’ before the latter has discovered the English word, the savage’s word will be adopted; and thus their means of communication will be a sort of patchwork of terms mutually intelligible. Surely something like this must have been the origin of all language; except that in the former case each party had possessed a language before, of which he had had to give up a part, in return for a corresponding part of his companion’s which he adopted. In the beginning of all things we must suppose men trying to express the notion of ‘eating,’ ‘going,’ &c., each with his own syllable, until one understood what the other meant; and the word which was thus apprehended became fixed, was accepted by both parties as the designation of the act, and became, in short, the first word of a language. When the smallest start has been made, the further progress is incalculably

swift; so eager is man for communication with his neighbour, that a single common point gained becomes the nucleus of a whole field; the reasoning or abstracting faculty forms designations for numberless things from the single root 'to eat;' and when its capabilities can be extended no further, the same process is repeated with some other root, till then unknown; and the process becomes easier each time, from the previous settlement of a certain number of words: we all know how greatly communication with people whose language we do not know is facilitated if we know only half a dozen words of it. The original settlement of roots must therefore have been a tentative process: the number that were actually adopted was very small, consisting only of those which succeeded in making themselves generally intelligible, from a vast, nay an infinite, number which may have been tried by individuals, but which, failing of the great end of all language, intelligibility to others, dropped off. Have we not noticed infants deliberately invent words and use them perseveringly, till, finding they cannot make them understood, they give them up as a bad job? Should it be objected that we, after all, make it a matter of chance why each root obtained the meaning which it assumed, we shall not dispute the point. If we are clear upon this point,—that the possession of clear thought, the generalizing faculty, and the conception of personality, which distinguish man from the brutes, rendered speech a necessity, and likewise furnished the form in which it must develop itself so soon as it had received the least start,—then we have assigned the whole course of language as something existing to the domain of reason, and can afford to admit that it was at the outset a matter of indifference, and, as such, liable to be determined mainly by chance, what syllable should be adopted to denote 'to go,' 'to eat,' and the rest.

* Yet Müller says, "It shows a want of appreciation as to the real bearings of our problem, if philosophers appeal to the fact that children are born without language, and gradually emerge from mutism to the full command of articulate speech." "Children, in learning to speak, do not invent language. Language is there ready made for them." "It is useless to inquire whether infants, left to themselves, would invent a language. It would be impossible, unnatural, and illegal to try the experiment; and without repeated experiments, the assertions of those who believe and those who disbelieve the possibility of children inventing a language of their own are equally valueless." To us it appears that, in the gradual advances made by infants towards intelligible speech, we have the process of the origin of all language daily repeated before our ears. The language that an English child first utters is *not* English; and months or years pass before he casts off the words of his infancy. The nurse often has extreme difficulty in discovering the meaning of some word of the child's own formation which obviously has to him a well-defined meaning. As he has intercourse with others besides his nurse, and perceives that they do not understand his speech, he finds it necessary to acquire the proper English words. This is exactly the process which we assume as the origin of all language: the terms which made themselves most generally understood supplanted those of limited range—the infantine terms, as it were.

We do not find quite so explicit a statement by Dr. Müller of his opinion on this subject, although this seems to be the legitimate tendency of his previous arguments; he merely says that the original roots are "phonetic types produced by a power inherent in human nature." But when he adds,

"There is a law, which runs through nearly the whole of nature, that every thing which is struck rings. Each substance has its own peculiar ring. . . . It was the same with man, the most highly organized of nature's works,"

we think he has introduced ("as an illustration only, and not as an explanation") something entirely irrelevant. What the sound given forth by *unorganized* metal plates or wires, when struck from *without*, has in common with the utterances given forth by the *organized* human frame, from an impulse *within*, we are at a loss to conceive. C. F. Becker's conception of language as a natural *organism* of the human frame, though it does not explain, nay simply refuses to explain, is far more just than this illustration, which compares it with unorganized matter.

We must now take leave of Dr. Müller, and of a work full of learning and of genius, which has the happy art of presenting a scientific and abstruse subject in a form which neither renders it inaccessible to persons of ordinary cultivation, nor abandons the scientific mode of discussion,—a work which has been long wanted both on the Continent and in England, and which has been executed with such wisdom and care, that it will probably long remain the chief authority on the Science of Language.

ART. VII.—STREET BALLADS.

FOR several years the fact that the street ballad-singer is disappearing from amongst us, has been forcing itself more and more on the unwilling minds of ourselves, and the few others who, from some strange and perverse idiosyncrasy, take an interest in this ancient if no longer honourable profession. His decline has latterly, we fear, been more rapid than that of any of his brethren of the streets. We can still make pretty sure, in several places well known to us, of coming across patterers in the exercise of their varied vocations, and can, by diverging a few hundred yards from our accustomed walk, acquire the privilege of investing the sum of one penny sterling in the purchase of five golden sovereigns, a 10*l.* bank-note, a composition for the instant removal and obliteration of dirt spots, grease spots, blood spots, and every other spot or stain to which mortal clothes are heirs, or some other equally advantageous bargain. Not seldom we

still pass a "screever" (if that be his proper name), pensively sitting on the pavement in the midst of his pictures of whole mackerel, halved salmons, ships, and moonlight scenes. Street musicians may be found at every corner, from the full unwashed German band and nigger melodist, to the poor Italian boy with his broken-winded hurdy-gurdy. Street conjurors and tumblers have of late been rather on the increase, and the ever-young Mr. Punch still commits and chuckles over his series of crimes, and defies the terrors of the visible and invisible world, to the untiring delight and solace of the appreciating British public.

It does not occur to one readily why the new police and the march of intellect should entirely tolerate other caterers for the amusement and edification of the frequenters of our thoroughfares, and yet should be hostile to the lineal descendant of the ancient minstrel. As long ago as the Tudor times, no doubt "minstrels" were styled "ministers of the devil," and were classed with the "sturdy rogues" to whose amendment, by means of pilory and whipping-post, our fathers seem to have paid much attention. But having survived Tudor statutes, and come down to our own time, we cannot see why the ballad-singer should give way before advancing civilisation sooner than the professors of the other humble branches of the Fine Arts above alluded to. But so it is; and though we can still find the professors of these in certain favourite pitches—if not on Monday, then on Tuesday or Wednesday,—when and where, in what favoured streets, at what auspicious hours, can we make equally sure of hearing a ballad-song in the good old style? Those two somewhat shabby companions, with voices of brazen twang, walking slowly down the sides of some quiet but not out-of-the-way thoroughfare, their hands filled with broad-sheets, their eyes keenly glancing round for every possible owner of a spare half-penny, and making the whole neighbourhood ring with their alternate lines and joint chorus of some unspeakable ditty, sung to a popular air, with variations imported on the spur of the moment,—alas, where are they gone? We ourselves have only heard two ballads sung in the streets (both near Clare Market) in the course of this year, and each time the performer was alone. He seemed to sing as conscious of his latter end, and "mindful of a better day," which both his voice and habiliments might easily have seen. More down in luck than even Scott's Last Minstrel, he had not even an orphan boy to carry his ballads. We committed the extravagance of paying a penny for each of our ballads on these two somewhat sad occasions, and passed on. The investment was not a good one; our purchases proved so feeble that we have not yet assigned them any place in our collection.

If the ballad-singer is disappearing from our streets, as would

seem to be the case, we may be excused for giving him a parting notice in consideration of his past career. We therefore propose to spend an hour with such readers as will follow us amongst our street ballads; but we should be very sorry to take them with us on false pretences. Let us say, therefore, at once, that we can promise them nothing either very wise or very witty. They will scarcely find a gleam of poetic power to repay them for weltering in whole seas of slip-slop. Neither will they much increase their store of available knowledge of "things not generally known" by accompanying us. We have not got the statistics of the whole ballad business in all its branches nicely done up and labelled in packets, and ready to be carried off and added to any person's stock of facts. Such glimpses of light on the subject as have come to us we will impart, but it must be on the understanding that we do not guarantee their accuracy, for we know too well the unreliable nature of many of our sources of information. In short, after years of familiarity with modern street ballads, and of acquaintance (for our relations have never risen to intimacy) with several of the persons engaged in the profession, we are still in a state of much uncertainty upon the subject generally. We live in a mysterious haze, which is not without attraction to us personally, and which we should not altogether rejoice in having to surrender to Mr. Horace Mann, or any other energetic son of science, who would seize on the whole matter, and reduce it to a tabular form in no time. No; we confess that we have very indistinct notions indeed as to who write the ballads, who buy them, why they buy them, how many are sold, in what places, and under what circumstances. But if there is any reader who is inclined for an autumnal easy-going vacational article, which, if it doesn't improve his mind, will at any rate not call upon him for much intellectual exertion, or hurt his morals, and may amuse him, let him come along fearlessly. We have this further to urge in favour of our subject. It is one of those windows through which we may get a glimpse at that very large body of our fellow-citizens of whom we know so little; and a better reason we do not care to find or to give. In our opinion there can be no better; one half of our world knows nothing of how the other half is living, what it thinks about, reads, takes pleasure in. We have no idea how the events which interest us are looked on by the half to which we do not belong. Any thing that will help us to a fuller knowledge in these matters must be very good for us; and reading street ballads will do something, if not much, towards it: for they are almost all written by persons of the class to which they are addressed; and the very sameness of them, the family likeness which runs through each separate branch of them, shows that they are

adapted to and meet the wants and views of that class. Let any reader of the *National Review* invest sixpence in the first dozen he can lay his hands on, and, after perusing them, just consider for a minute the enormous gulf which must lie between the thousand buyers and readers of Tennyson, and the tens of thousand serious buyers and readers of these broad-sheets, and we believe that several new thoughts will be suggested to him. We are strictly within the mark in saying tens of thousands; for though ballad-singing is dying out in London, and the broad-sheet ballad business generally is not what it used to be, it is still enormous.

Ballads still form an important, perhaps the chief part of the reading of a large class of our population. One London firm alone, the successors of Catnach the Great, have on stock half a million of ballads, more than 900 reams of them; and even in these degenerate days, when a ballad makes a real hit, from 20,000 to 30,000 copies of it will go off in a very short time. Then it finds its way into a book for town consumption. The chief circulation of the broad-sheet is in the country, where the conservative instinct is strong in this as in all other matters. The penny song-books, which have to a great extent superseded the broad-sheet in London, are not valued in the shires. "They hold too much," we have been told; "the country people consider them too big, sir, and that it can't be all correct that's in them. So they like the sheet better, that they've been used to."

Now let us turn to the ballads themselves. We do not propose to notice any which we have not ourselves found in circulation; but before coming to strictly contemporary productions, we must say a few words about those older ones, which every ballad-fancier must have found scattered about England. The best of the well-known old ballads we have never met with; but several of the inferior ones are still in broad-sheet. We have bought "Barbara Allen," "Gilderoy," "Lord Thomas and Lady Eleanor," and several Robin-Hood ballads, within the last few years, the text of which differs very slightly from the versions in Percy's *Relics*, and other collections. Besides these, we have come across several local narrative ballads, some of considerable length, such as "Jemmy and Nancy of Yarmouth," and the "Berkshire Lady," in parts, and running to some 200 lines each; others much shorter. The following is a specimen of these latter. We give it in two versions: the first is copied from the broad-sheet; the second is in the words in which we learnt it by heart from hearing it often sung in our youth. The variations are curious, and worth remarking. We have found many other instances of ballads thus adapted in different counties. Some-

times the metre is entirely changed, an expression only remaining the same here and there.

"THE THREE BUTCHERS.

It was Ips, Gips, and Johnson, as I have heard many say,
They had five hundred guineas, all on a market-day ;
As they rode over Northumberland, as hard as they could ride,
'O hark, O hark,' says Johnson, 'I hear a woman cry.'
Then Johnson, being a valiant man, a man of courage bold,
He ranged the woods all over, till this woman he did behold.
'How came you here?' says Johnson, 'how came you here, I pray ?
I am come here to relieve you, if you will not me betray.'

'There has been ten swaggering blades, has hand and foot me bound,
And stripped me stark naked, with my hair pinn'd on the ground.'
Then Johnson being a valiant man, a man of courage bold,
He took his coat from off his back, to keep her from the cold.
As they rode over Northumberland, as hard as they could ride,
She put her fingers in her ears, and dismally she cried ;
Then up starts ten swaggering blades, with weapons in their hands,
And riding up to Johnson, they bid him for to stand.

'It's I'll not stand,' says Ipsen ; 'then no indeed, not I.'
'Nor I'll not stand,' says Gibson ; 'I'd sooner live than die.'
'Then I will stand,' says Johnson, 'I'll stand the while I can ;
I never yet was daunted, nor afraid of any man.'
Then Johnson drew his glittering sword with all his might and main,
So well he laid upon them, that eight of them were slain ;
As he was fighting the other two, this woman he did not mind,
She took the knife all from his side, and ripp'd him up behind.

'Now I must fall,' says Johnson, 'I must fall unto the ground ;
For relieving this wicked woman, she gave me my death-wound.
O base woman, O base woman, what hast thou done ?
Thou hast killed the finest butcher that ever the sun shone on.'
This happened on a market-day, as people was riding by,
To see this dreadful murder, they gave the hue and cry.
It's now this woman's taken, and bound in irons strong,
For killing the finest butcher that ever the sun shone on."

"THE JOLLY BUTCHERS.

Ther' were three jolly butchers,
Three butchers gay and free,
Ther' was Hillson, ther' was Gillson,
And Johnson he made three.

Now as they rode along the road,
Their money for to pay,
'Lord save our lives,' says Johnson,
'From evil company.'

'O gentlemen, kind gentlemen,
Pray pass not by in scorn ;
For 'tis fie upon the weary day
As ever I was born.

They whip-pèd me, they strip-pèd me,
 My hands and feet they bound,
 And left me here all naked
 With my apron to the ground.'

Now Johnson was a valiant man,
 And the cold he did not mind;
 So he stripped his coat from off his back,
 To keep her from the wind.

Now as they rode, a looking out
 So sharp of either hand,
 Three men they jumped from out a hedge,
 And called on them to stand.

'I'll stand, I'll stand,' says Johnson,
 'I'll stand as long as I can;
 For I was never yet afeard
 Of any mortal man.'

Now Johnson was a valiant man,
 And his bullets he let fly;
 He killèd two out of the three,
 The tother runned away.

Now as they rode along the road
 As vast as they could ride,
 She boldly came to Johnson,
 And ripped him in the side.

'I falls, I falls,' says Johnson;
 'I falls unto the ground;
 For I believe, within my heart,
 She's gi'n me my death-wound.'"

In coming to the purely modern ballad, we must give precedence to those which have to do with great crimes. They are by far the most numerous, and are bought with singular eagerness. There is no great criminal of any note in our day who has not been the subject of several ballads. And these are all of one character. They are almost always printed on a sheet to themselves. If the prisoner made a confession, it is given either at the head or foot of the sheet, but no other verses are printed on the same sheet; whereas in most other cases a song, or a second ballad, is stuck in the corner, to make up the money's worth. The family likeness, of which we have spoken already, will be plain at once to the reader from the selections we give from the first two or three which come to our hand.

"A new Song on the recent Poisoning-case with which William Palmer stands charged" begins:

"Come, all good people, pay attention
 Unto these lines that I indite,
 Of cruel murders I will mention,
 That will fill your mind with fright:

A poisoner, named William Palmer,
He so many deeds have done,
Many a wife weeps for her husband,
Many a mother for her son.

* * * * *

Great deeds by poison he contracted ;
But whether they were great or small,
He poisoned all his helpless victims,
O God, thy vengeance on him fall !
First his wife and then his brother,
They died almost in health and bloom ;
The next fell on Mrs. Palmer's mother,
Antimony was their doom.

If Lord George Bentinck he have murdered,
Which in course of time we all shall see,
God's justice it will overtake him,
Thou canst not from his vengeance flee.

Chorus.

So all good people, pray take warning,
Of false friendship pray take care.
Remember the crimes of William Palmer,
Known as the Rugeley poisoner."

Our next extract shall be from "The Esher Tragedy," a ballad published at Preston :

" You feeling Christians, give attention,
Young and old of each degree,
A tale of sorrow I will mention,—
Join and sympathise with me :
It's of a sad and dreadful murder
I shall quickly let you hear,
Which was committed by a mother
On her six young children dear."

After the usual detailed description of the crime, interspersed with moral reflections, the ballad ends :

" Within the prison's massive walls
What anguish will torment her breast,
When phantoms of her six dear children
Will disturb her of her rest !
Such a sad and dreadful murder,
On record there is no worse,
Committed by a cruel mother,
Once the Prince of Wales's nurse."

"The fate of Robert Marley, for the murder of Richard Cope in Parliament Street," published by Rial, of Monmouth Court, Seven Dials, is the last we shall quote from :

" Come, all young men, by me take warning,
To my decease an ear pray lend :
Approaching is the Monday morning
When on a tree my life must end ;

For murdering my fellow-creature,
 I'm to the gallows doomed to go ;
 For me, alas, there is no mercy,
 Not while upon this earth below.

Chorus.

My sad name is Robert Marley—
 What a dreadful sight to see—
 For slaying of my fellow-creature,
 Doomed to die on Newgate tree."

Then comes the usual history. We quote a portion, which will remind readers of Hood's celebrated lines on Thurtell's murder :

" His neck they cut from ear to ear,
 His skull they battered in ;
 His name was Mr. William Wear,
 He lived in Lion's Inn."

Marley says :

" On the 20th day of last October,
 About the hour of nine o'clock,
 To Parliament Street I wandered over,
 Where soon I caused a dreadful shock :
 A tradesman's shop I soon did enter,
 Where to gain some plunder I did hope ;
 And with a dreadful life-preserver
 I slew the servant, Richard Cope.
 About the head I cruel beat him,—
 I saw him weltering in his gore,—
 I beat him till I thought I killed him,
 I saw him fall upon the floor, &c.

* * * * *

Three weeks in pain my victim lingered,
 My heart was then more hard than steel,
 And when brought in his dying presence,
 I did not for his sufferings feel ;
 But when tried at the bar of Newgate,
 Though I so hardened did appear,
 When the jury found me guilty,
 My conscience smote my breast with fear ;
 And when the judge said, ' Robert Marley,
 For you on earth there is no hope—
 The sentence is, that you be hanged,
 For murdering of Richard Cope.'
 The dreadful moments are approaching
 When I to the scaffold must be led,
 Trembling in my dismal dungeon,
 In grief I droop my guilty head.
 For me there's not one spark of pity,
 No sympathy for my sad fate ;
 All my crimes I view before me :
 I see my error now too late."

These three ballads come not only from different publishers but from distant towns,—London, Birmingham, and Prestoi

but they all have the same stamp. And the whole of the last dying speeches and confessions, trials and sentences, from whatever part of the country they come, run in the same form of quaint and circumstantial detail: appeals to Heaven, to young men, to young women, to Christians in general, and moral reflections. We have seldom met with one of a different character; and the ballads on "appalling accidents," which are also very common, are like them. We give one specimen of these before quitting this part of our subject. The ballad on the "appalling accident at the Victoria Theatre" is headed with a list of killed and wounded. It begins:

" On the twenty-seventh of December,
 When every heart was light and gay,
 And which for long we will remember,
 Which did occur on Boxing-day.
 At the Victoria Theatre,
 Numbers there were wounded sore,
 While many fell that dreadful moment
 In death's cold arms to rise no more.

Chorus.

Sixteen killed, and fifty wounded—
 A moment previous all was gay
 At the Victoria Theatre,
 Where they'd gone on Boxing-day.

We cannot tell what is before us,
 Like those who left their homes so gay,
 Full of mirth, and in enjoyment,
 To banish grief on Boxing-day.
 We know not what may be to-morrow:
 Then trust in Him who reigns on high;
 All our joy may turn to sorrow,
 Youth as well as age may die."

In strange contrast to the monotonous morality of murder-and-accident ballads stand out what, for want of a better name, we may distinguish as the Cadgers' ballads. They are not numerous, but form such a distinct class that we cannot pass them over, although, perhaps, the less said about them the better. One specimen shall suffice. When the St. Giles's rookery was pulled down, some years since, to make room for the New Oxford-Street improvements, the event seems to have happened which is commemorated in "The Cadgers' Ball." The intention of the Government as to their favourite haunt began to be known.

" As soon as it got vind, however,
 Old St. Giles's vos to fall,
 They all declared, so help their never,
 They'd vind up with a stunnin' ball.
 Tol lol, &c.

Jack Flipflap took the affair in hand, sirs,
 Who understood the thing complete ;
 He'd often danced afore the public,
 On the boards about the streets.
 Old Mother Swankey she consented
 To lend her lodging-house for nix :
 Says she, ' The crib comes down to morrow,
 So go it just like beans and bricks.'
 Tol lol, &c."

Jack Flipflap's arrangements having been completed, the arrival of the company is described :

" Ragged Jack, wot chalks ' Starvation,'
 Looked quite fat and swellish there ;
 While Dick, wot dumbs it round the nation,
 Had all the jaw among the fair ;
 Limping Ned, wot brought his duchess,
 At home had left his wooden pegs ;
 And Jim, wot cadges it on crutches,
 Vos the nimblest covey on his legs.
 Tol lol, &c."

The next arrival was old Joe Burn,
 Wot does the fits to Nature chuff ;
 And Fogg, wot's blind each day in Ho'bern,
 Saw'd his way there clear enough ;
 Mr. Sinniwater Sparrow,
 In corduroys span new and nice,
 Drove up in his pine-apple barrow,
 Which he us'd to sell a win a slice.
 Tol lol, &c."

The dancing is treated of in detail, and then comes the catastrophe :

" They does now set to galloping,
 And stamp'd with all their might and main,
 They thump'd the floor so precious hard in,
 It split the ancient crib in twain.
 Some pitched into the road bent double,
 Some was smash'd with bricks done brown ;
 So the cadgers sav'd ' the Crown ' the trouble
 Of sending coves to pull it down.
 Tol lol, &c."

It is obvious to the meanest capacity that the men who write this kind of cadger ballad are quite of another stamp from the authors of the other street ballads. They are writing down to their readers, and not from a common level. We think their hands can also be traced in such comic ballads as "Bubbs' Evening Party." These latter are all broad satires on upstartism. For instance, the "*Père Bubbs*" is a "respectable Leadenhall slaughterman," who takes a house in Belgravia; and, with a view to getting into polite society, gives a great entertainment, inserting his invitations in *Bell's Life*, hiring nigger melodists,

two Punch's, and making other ludicrous preparations. Joey Bubbs, the son,

"Twenty medical students brought home, and some writing men,
With a giant from Norfolk, Sam Hall, and two fighting men."

Of course the entertainment comes to amazing grief, and ends in a mill between Sam Hall and the fighting men, during which

"The two Punch-and-Judys, at no great amount of pains,
Stuff'd both their theatres full of linen and counterpanes,
And vanished away, while old Bubbs the wine sent along,
Not forgetting to clear out the hall as they went along;
In fact, as he swore when he'd found they'd been doing him,
What was stolen and smashed in the house would half ruin him.
Next day from Belgravia he moved in disgust with it,
And vowed a grand party no more he'd be cussed with it."

The only noteworthy fact about this species is, that they almost invariably are attacks upon vulgar attempts to push up in the world. One would rather have expected from such a quarter attacks on those who are already at the top of the tree.

It is with some diffidence that we approach the next branch of our subject, the political street ballad. It has of late been a subject of constant and painful remark to moralists, that the absence of reverence is on the increase, and is in fact a growing vice of the times in which we live. Without pledging ourselves to this belief, we must own that the ballad-singer handles the names and doings of those who sit in high places with a familiarity scarcely equalled by Mr. Punch himself. Educated ourselves to look with a certain awful respect on the men who rule us, and desiring as we do that the prefix of "Right Honourable" should carry with it some such weight of dignity as a third tail conferred on a basha in the reign of Chrononhotonthologus, we would gladly have passed over this ground with a light foot. But, after all, statesmen are but men, even the greatest of them. Many years ago we had a young friend, an orphan boy, much given to ruminating, who was brought up by an uncle and aunt. The uncle was a person of great dignity, and bore rule in his household in an impressive manner. The aunt, in teaching our friend out of some book of rudimentary instruction, had occasion to impress upon him the fact that all human beings were worms. The discovery was somewhat startling to his youthful notions of natural history, but after pondering some minutes he seemed to have partially mastered it. "Then, aunt, I am a worm?" he said without effort. "Of course, my dear." "And you are a worm, aunt?" "Yes, my dear." "And the king, then, is a worm, aunt?" he inquired after a pause (a king then ruled these realms). "Yes, my dear, we are all worms," was the reply

again. "But, aunt," he asked for the last time, with a great effort, and looking full in her face with wondering eyes, "then is Uncle Joe a worm?" Yes; even Uncle Joe was a worm; our friend had to let the lesson sink into him, as we all must. Statesmen and the great of the earth are but as the rest of us at bottom, and must bear their burden of the irreverence of the age in which they are born, as well as other men. Perhaps it is only skin-deep, after all; at any rate, let us hope so. We may enter, then, more in sorrow than anger, on the contemplation of historical names from the point of view of the street ballad-singer and his audience.

The broadest shoulders should bear the heaviest burden; so we will select the most eminent and respectable of living statesmen to exemplify the manner in which the ballad-singer deals with the illustrious amongst his contemporaries. All readers will remember Earl Russell's mission to Vienna, and his secession from the Aberdeen Cabinet. About the same time happened the disgraceful demonstrations as to the Sunday question, when Lord Ebury was threatened, and the mob of boys broke some windows in Belgravia. Upon which events the ballad-writer, meditating, produces the following:

"LITTLE LORD JOHN OUT OF SERVICE.

You lads of this nation, in every station,
I pray give attention, and listen to me,
I'm little Jack Russell, a man of great bustle,
Who served Queen Victoria by land and by sea;
They call me a Proosian, an Austrian, a Roosian,
And off to Vienna they sent me afar;
They'd not me believe then, they vowed I'd deceived them,
And called me Friend of the great Russian Czar.

Chorus.

I'm little Jack Russell, a man of great bustle,
I'm full of vexation, grief, sorrow, and care,
I have got in disgrace, and am now out of place;
But I never broke windows round Bel-ge-rave Square.

In great London City for me they've no pity;
And Moon the Lord Mayor to my face told me plain,
All the freemen would scout me, and old women rout me,
If ever I went to the City again.
I'm the son of old Bedford, I'm going to Deptford
To look for employment, and find out a friend,
And then I'll come back with a pack on my back,
Bawling frying-pans, saucepans, and kettles to mend.

Chorus. I'm, &c.

I have lost all my riches, I have worn out my breeches,
I am turned out of place, and have nowhere to go,
My state is most shocking, great holes in my stocking,
And my poor tender toes peeping out of my shoe—

Why should they so sarve me, and try for to starve me?
 I fought for my country and stood by my Queen.
 Bad luck to the Prussians, the Austrians, and Russians,
 And jolly bad luck to old Lord Aberdeen.

Chorus. I'm, &c.

I went like a wary plenipotentiary
 To the town of Vienna to settle the war,
 Where I saw Francis Joseph, King Peter, and Moses,
 And I fought Alexander, the great Russian Czar;
 And when I came back they began for to clack,
 They blamed me and gamed me and pulled out my hair,
 They threatened to lick me, and nicely they kicked me,
 Bawling pickled eels' feet around Bel-ge-rave Square.

Chorus. I'm, &c.

I love Queen Victoria, I dearly adore her,
 Although at Vienna I did her displease;
 I wish all the Russians and Austrians and Prussians
 Were tied in a blanket, and smothered with fleas.
 Oh dear, hey down diddle, I have the Scotch fiddle,
 I know that I caught it of old Aberdeen,—
 Now I will so clever sing England for ever,
 Down with the Russians, and God save the Queen.

Chorus. I'm, &c."

This ballad is one of the few which bear a signature. It is signed "John Morgan" in the copy which we possess. For a long time we believed this name to be a mere *nom-de-plume*; but the other day, when making a small purchase in Monmouth Court, we were informed, in answer to a casual question, that this is the real name of the author of some of the best comic ballads. Our informant added, that he is an elderly, we may say old, gentleman, living somewhere in Westminster; but the exact whereabouts we could not discover. Mr. Morgan followed no particular visible calling so far as our informant knew, except writing ballads, by which he could not earn much of a livelihood, as the price of an original ballad, in these buying-cheap days, has been screwed down by publishers to somewhere about a shilling sterling. Something more like bread-and-butter might be made perhaps by poets who were in the habit of singing their own ballads, as some of them do, but not Mr. Morgan. Should this ever meet the eye of that gentleman (a not very probable event, we fear), we beg to apologise for the liberty we have taken in using his verses and name, and hope he will excuse us, having regard to the subject in which we are his humble fellow-labourers. We could scarcely avoid naming him, the fact being that he is the only living author of street ballads whose name we know. That self-denying mind, indifferent to worldly fame, which characterised the architects of our cathedrals and abbeys, would seem to have descended on our ballad-writers; and we must be thank-

ful, therefore, to be able to embalm and hand down to posterity a name here and there, such as William of Wykeham, and John Morgan. In answer to our inquiries in this matter, generally we have been told, "Oh, any body writes them;" and with that answer we have had to rest satisfied. But in presence of that answer, we walk about the streets with a new sense of wonder, peering into the faces of those of our fellow-lieges who do not carry about with them the external evidence of overflowing exchequers, and saying to ourselves, "That man may be a writer of ballads."

We believe, however, that we are safe in stating that some at least of these authors still sing their own productions; for we have not only the word of pinners-up and publishers to this effect, but have ourselves noticed a certain sensitiveness among the brotherhood, which we are at a loss to account for except upon this hypothesis. Nor do we rest on our own observation only. A friend of ours, an equal enthusiast with ourselves, and at the same time more practical, never would complete his purchase until he had heard the whole ballad sung at least once through. He maintained that the flavour was much improved for ever after if this rule had been rigorously adhered to at the time of purchase. One Saturday afternoon, as he was walking near the Old Kent Road, the familiar sounds caught his ear; he followed, and was soon close to a ballad-singer, a middle-aged, middle-sized, slightly dilapidated person, with no great strength about him but his voice. Our friend pulled up, and walked slowly along on the pavement by the side of the singer, who was just beginning his stave again. He sang two stanzas with his eye on the new comer, and then offered him the sheet; but our friend shook his head. After one more stanza, the offer was repeated, and again declined. "Presently," our friend said, "presently." The man upon this continued singing, keeping his eye, however, restlessly on his apparently unwelcome companion; and after selling one or two sheets, and coming to the third stanza, again he stopped short. He looked again full at our friend, and then, seeing no sign of his moving on, dashed his old hat more firmly on his head with one hand, clutched his bundle of ballads with the other, and rushed into the nearest public, exclaiming, "There be lots more verses; but they be so 'nation cutting, I can't sing 'em!"

But to return to our statesmen. Each of them has his portrait fixed in the street-ballads. The jauntiness of our Premier is thoroughly appreciated in the streets; a very popular ballad, entitled "The Wonders of the 19th Century," asks

"What do you think of Palmerston
Since he has had the sack?"

He went down Piccadilly,
Singing ri-fol-la-rol-whack.
He sold his coat and trousers,
And his hat for seven bob :
He got in a jolly row, sir,
And was nearly sent to quod."

The same song inquires—

"Now, what is your opinion
Of old Derby and his crew,
Old Packington and Walpole,
And Disraeli the Jew?
Why, I think they wanted office,
And they caused a pretty bother :
Tories and Whigs are six of one
And half a dozen of t'other."

But, on the whole, the ballad-singer is a Liberal, though of an old-fashioned kind, and loses no opportunity of telling the Tories that he, for his part, does not look upon them as the men whom he desires for his rulers. The leaders of the Opposition are usually treated somewhat as follows :

"'Tis of a great sportsman in London did dwell,
Who had a pet jockey, an Israelite swell,
His name was Ben Dizzy, as I have been told,
With plenty of brass, and some silver and gold."

The lord and the jockey hold discourse as to how to get the horse (John Bull) safe in their stable, but

"As Johnny was pacing the back-garden round,
A searching for grub as was wholesome and sound,
He twigged Master Ben, and what sore did him rile,
With a new Reform Bill, in the old Tory style."

So John Bull kicks over the Tory jockey, runs over his owner, and Darbee and Dizzey both lie buried in one (political) grave. A worthy moral concludes the piece :

"Now, all you great statesmen, be warned by their fate,
Or you'll find your mistake, and repent when too late ;
And all you bold jockeys, mind what tricks you tries on
John Bull, who abhors and detests 'em like pison."

But though the character of the rest of our statesmen is pretty well stereotyped by the ballad-singer, the Chancellor of the Exchequer alone seems to puzzle him completely, and is sometimes at the height of popularity, and sometimes the object of the roughest abuse. Take, for instance, the following contrast :

(1860) "Britannia seems delighted now
Some good our members has done,
We will unite, and boldly fight,
And stick by Billy Gladstone :

He has proved himself the poor man's friend,
 Some clever thoughts instil him,—
 May Billy Gladstone never die,
 And nobody never kill him," &c.

(1861) "O Billy, Billy Gladstone,
 May you in the river jump,
 And have nothing stronger
 Than the running at the pump.
 May you fall down like a donkey,
 And a ditch be tumbled in.
 What right had you at all, I say,
 To tax old women's gin?" &c.

The political ballads are all in this rollicking doggrel, which bubbles over into defiance when they touch on foreign questions. The idea of a French invasion excites any thing but a panic in the streets:

"Always, sir, speak what is true :
 We was not licked at Waterloo ;
 You may whistle cock a-doodle-doo,
 Said Farmer Bull to Napoleon.
 Poor Palmerston now licked has been ;
 He went a-crying to England's Queen,
 They kicked me out by just nineteen
 Through Mr. Louis Napoleon.

Old England ever shall be free,
 By no one we will frightened be,
 We'll banish all the refugees,
 And send them far across the seas.
 We wish you all a very good night,
 And always do the thing that's right :
 Shake hands ; we do not want to fight,
 Said Old John Bull to Napoleon."

The temper of the ballads on such questions as strikes and lock-outs has struck us as singularly fair and moderate, and very creditable to the streets. In the middle of the bitter struggle of the last three years in the building-trade, we find nothing really violent or objectionable.

Out of the mass it is not easy to choose, but perhaps the following extracts, from "The great Lock-out; or the Masters' Rights and nothing more, the Men's Rights and nothing less," and from "The glorious Strike of the Builders," are as fair specimens as any we could give :

"They locked us out without a cause,—
 Our rights was our desires,—
 We'll work for Trollope, Peto, Lucas,
 For all the world, and Myers.
 If we can only have our rights,
 We will go to work more stronger :
 Nine hours a day, that's what we say,
 And not a moment longer.

We'll stand it out and look about ;
 The masters we don't heed 'em,—
 Nine hours a day, a fair day's pay,
 Britannia's rights and freedom.
 Assistance does come pouring in,
 And it will pour in faster,
 Till the master does respect the men,
 And the men respect the master.

Here's a health unto the builder's men,
 The bricklayers and plasterers ;
 If the masters cannot beat the men,
 The men will lick the masters.
 Justice now is all they seek,
 And they must have it very quick,
 Or all the masters in a week
 Will be took up for lunatic."

The next quotation is from a ballad which came out later in the autumn, when the contest was in another phase. The masters were trying to fill their shops with non-society men, and the feeling was much more bitter than at first. Under the circumstances we cannot help wondering at the continued good temper of the ballads, which, it must be remembered, would be absolute failures and losses if they did not jump with the humour of the moment, and are therefore a very fair test of what that feeling must have been at the time amongst the mass of the work-people:

" Let all those crawlers go in and work—
 They're not used to handle a knife and fork ;
 You love them like a Jew loves pork,—
 Hearts of oak are the builders.

Let them employ non-society men,
 They don't know a roof from a gable-end,
 They scarcely know a cock from a hen,
 They are but slop-made builders.

They did begrudge to pay the smart ;
 To work like men they've got no heart ;
 They'll slave for three bob a day or part—
 Not so the united builders.

Then be good-tempered to a man,
 Don't let your masters you trepan ;
 To do without you they never can—
 Success attend the builders."

The contrast between the spirit and temper of the ballads of the present day on the questions as to which one would expect the most bitter feeling to prevail, and those of fifteen or twenty years ago, is certainly both remarkable and encouraging. Without putting their evidence at more than it is worth, so far as it goes it is unmistakable proof of a very much better state of

things. In no department is this more apparent than in Church matters, which are now handled in the streets in a spirit of conservative Protestantism. The ballads come out by shoals when any ecclesiastical event of more than common interest is stirring, such as the Pope's celebrated move which produced the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and the riots at St. George's-in-the-East. The following chorus from one of the ballads on the former topic may be taken as a fair specimen :

“Old England does not care a fig
For Rome or cardinal, pope or pig.
Foolish Pius, go the rig,
And sell your crucifix and wig.
Monks and nuns and fools afloat,
We'll have no bull shoved down our throat.
Cheer up, and shout, Down with the Pope,
And his Bishop, Cardinal Wiseman !”

The ballad-singer has a decided distaste for the confessional and “beautiful garments;” but even these cannot rouse him for more than a moment or two out of his habitual good-humour. It is difficult in the St. George's ballads to find any thing more severe than such verses as the following :

“Come all you sporting parsons,
And listen to my song,
About the fight to save our souls,
I'll not detain you long :
King Bryan of St. George's,
He swears by all that's right,
In spite of all Whitechapel dogs,
He'll be a Puseyite.

* * * * *

Let Hugh Allen then go forward,
And fight it like a man ;
Establish the old Church again,
And we'll take him by the hand.
The religion of our forefathers
Let us all enjoy,
And reckon old King Bryan
As a very wicked boy.

Let no animosity be shown ;
To your religion all stand true,
Both Protestants and Catholics,
And you'll never have cause to rue.
Let each his own opinion have,
And no one then annoy ;
Each to his own church take his way,
From the old man to the boy.”

A good deal of painful scandal would have been saved us had people in higher positions in life acted on the ballad-writer's principles.

The only distinct classes of ballads which remain are those on prize-fights and sporting-matches, and on war topics. The former are very poor indeed; we have seen between thirty and forty, for instance, on the fight between Sayers and Heenan, not one of which rises to the common average of merit. The war ballads are quaint enough, many of them. Havelock and Lord Clyde have been the popular heroes in the streets, as elsewhere, but they cannot come near Miss Nightingale. She is the heroine of as many ballads as the Cid, from only one of which we have space to quote:

“When sympathy thy breast did enter,
 Oh, it was a grand idea,
 When through danger you did venture,
 When you fared the great Crimea.

Noble was thy good intentions;
 The seas thou braved through storm and gale;
 And when the blessed name is mentioned
 Of the sweet Miss Nightingale,
 Every heart with joy shall beat then.
 Many a Briton near thee died;
 You was from danger ne’er retreating,
 When by the suffering soldier’s side.

By thy care and close attention
 Many a soldier’s life was saved,
 Who but for thee, as I do mention,
 Would now lay in a foreign grave.
 Neglected lay the dying soldier,
 His features ghastly wan and pale,
 Until with joy he did behold her,—
 The lovely sweet Miss Nightingale.”

Besides the ballads which may be thus roughly classified, there are the great mass, which deal with the habits, follies, and passing events of the day, of which it is impossible to give any idea. But we may safely say, that there is still a very large section of the British public, though probably a decreasing one, which must and will have life put into doggerel verse for its special delectation. A visit to the stall of a pinner-up, or to the place of business of any of the publishers of ballads, will convince any reader of this fact who may not be willing to take our word. For the benefit of such we may say that there is a very intelligent pinner-up whose pitch is close by St. Pancras Church in the New Road, and perhaps the largest publisher in England is Fortey, in Monmouth Court, the successor of the great Catnach. Catnach was the Leo X. of street publishers. We have often heard, and still believe, though his successors deny the fact, that he kept a fiddler day and night in a back room, where he used to sit, like Old King Cole, with a pot of ale and a long

clay, receiving ballad-writers and singers, and judging of the merits of any production which was brought to him by having it sung then and there to some popular air played by his fiddler. His broad-sheets contain all sorts of songs and ballads, for he had a most catholic taste, and introduced the custom of taking, from any writer living or dead, whatever he fancied, and printing it side by side with the productions of his own clients. He also appears to have first filled up the corners of his broad-sheets with sentiments, which custom still obtains more or less. We find, for instance, the following, amongst others, on some of the last sheets we have purchased :

“Honour and affluence to the patrons of trade, liberty, and property.”

“Improvement to our arts, and invention to our artists.”

“May our commanders have the eye of a Hawke, and the heart of a Wolfe.”

“May the meanest Britain scorn the highest slave.”

“May French principles never corrupt English manners.”

“May the produce of Britain never exceed her consumption.”

We cannot echo the last sentiment, which is the only one of at all a dangerous tendency we have come across.

The great Catnach was equally catholic as to the woodcuts with which he was wont to adorn his broad-sheets. These are taken from any source, with an equal disregard of the laws of copyright and fitness. In most cases they have not the slightest reference to the ballad of which they form the head-piece. To take the first instances at hand, our copy of “Sally Brown” is headed by a well-worn cut of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza riding, with the windmills in the distance, in which we are much mistaken if we do not recognise the early hand of George Cruikshank. Tom Bowling comes under an old Dutch cut of a dame in a steeple-hat, sitting at a table with four wondrous figures before her, one of whom seems to be presenting her with a pug dog or some unknown animal, and the others to be applauding with uplifted hands; while “The Poacher” comes under a cut of a youth with a large watering-pot tending flowers, in what, from the number of cypresses, we take to be a cemetery.

The decay of the street ballad-singer, which is a fact beyond question, and which we attribute more to the establishment of such places of amusement as Canterbury Hall and the Oxford, and the sale of penny song-books, than to the advance of education or the interference of the police, will probably be followed by the disappearance of the broad-sheet, and may silence the class of authors who write the street ballads. We do not pretend to say that they will be any great loss. At the outset we told our readers that we had nothing either wise or witty to produce to them. But we must say, speaking from a large ac-

quaintance with their productions, that, taken as a whole, their speech, though often coarse and rude, is honest and right-minded, and much less likely to do harm to their readers than most of the religious newspapers of our day, or many other organs of high repute in the world. And inasmuch as they still form the principal light reading of a very large number of our fellow countrymen and countrywomen, we cannot think any apology is needed for casting a look at them, little as in themselves they may be calculated to interest or profit us.

We have not yet, however, spoken of what is to us the most remarkable, as well as the most satisfactory, side of our subject.

The ballad-singer, with his rough broad-sheet, travelled, as we have seen, over the whole surface of man's life, political and social. There was one time of the year, however, when he went out of his every-day path, and touched on deeper matters than accidents, murders, battles, or politics. Christmas brought to him, too, and to his audience, its witness of the unity of the great family in heaven and earth, its story of the life and death of Him in whom that unity stands. The Christmas broad-sheet, of which several copies lie before us, has several distinctive marks which show that it was an object of more than ordinary care to publishers and ballad-singers. In the first place, these Christmas sheets are double the size of the ordinary broad-sheet, and contain four or five carols—generally one long narrative ballad of some twenty verses, and three or four short pieces. Each of them is headed by a large woodcut roughly coloured (and so far as our experience goes, in these alone is colour ever used), of the crucifixion, the raising of Lazarus, or some kindred subject, in which, although modern Gothic churches and men in strange costumes are introduced, there is nothing whatever to shock the most reverent Christian. Small woodcuts, also coloured, of the ark, the last supper, the resurrection, are scattered over the sheet, and the printing is much more careful than usual.

Looking at these Christmas broad-sheets, it really would seem as if the poorest of our brethren claimed their right to higher nourishment than common for their minds and souls, as well as for their bodies, at the time of year when all Christendom should rejoice. And this first impression is confirmed when we examine their contents. In all those which we have seen, the only piece familiar to us is that noble old carol, "When shepherds kept their flocks by night." Where the rest come from, we cannot even conjecture; but in the whole of them there is not one which we should wish were not there. We have been unable to detect in them even a coarse expression; and of the hateful narrowness and intolerance, the namby-pamby, the meaningless cant, the flaccid

familiarity with holy things, which makes us turn with a shudder from so many modern collections of hymns, there is simply nothing.

Account for it how we will, there is the simple fact. Perhaps it may lead us to think somewhat differently of those whom we are in the habit of setting down in the mass as little better than heathens. We cannot conclude this article better than by giving an extract or two from these Christmas broad-sheets.

"The Saviour's Garland, a choice Collection of the most esteemed Carols," published about ten years since, so far as we can learn, has the usual long narrative ballad, which begins:

"Come, all you faithful Christians
That dwell upon the earth,—
Come celebrate the morning
Of our dear Saviour's birth :
This is the happy morning,—
This is the happy morn
Whereon, to save our ruined race,
The Son of God was born."

And after telling simply the well-known story, it ends:

"Now to Him up ascended,
Then let your praises be,
That we His steps may follow,
And He our pattern be ;
That when our lives are ended
We may hear His blessed call :
'Come, souls, receive the kingdom
Prepared for you all.'"

Another, "The Star of Bethlehem, a Collection of esteemed Carols for the present year," opens its narrative thus:

"Let all that are to mirth inclined
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done,
In sending His beloved Son.

Let all our songs and praises be
Unto His heavenly Majesty ;
And evermore amongst our mirth
Remember Christ our Saviour's birth.

The twenty-fifth day of December
We have great reason to remember ;
In Bethlehem, upon that morn,
There was a blessed Saviour born," &c.

One of the short pieces, by no means the best, we give whole:

"With one consent let all the earth
The praise of God proclaim,
Who sent the Saviour, by whose birth
To man salvation came.

All nations join and magnify
The great and wondrous love
Of Him who left for us the sky,
And all the joys above.

But vainly thus in hymns of praise
We bear a joyful part,
If while our voices loud we raise,
We lift not up our heart.

We, by a holy life alone,
Our Saviour's laws fulfil ;
By those His glory is best shown
Who best perform His will.

May we to all His words attend
With humble, pious care ;
Then shall our praise to heaven ascend,
And find acceptance there."

We do not suppose that the contents of these Christmas broad-sheets are supplied by the same persons who write the murder-ballads, or the attacks on crinoline. They may be borrowed from well-known hymn-books for any thing we know. But if they are borrowed, we must still think it much to the credit of the selectors, that, where they might have found so much that is objectionable and offensive, they should have chosen as they have done. We only hope that their successors, whoever they may be who will become the caterers for their audiences, will set nothing worse before them.

ART. VIII.—TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

- I. *Religio Laici.* By Thomas Hughes, Author of "Tom Brown's School-Days."
- II. *The Mote and the Beam: a Clergyman's Lessons from the Present Panic.* By the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Incumbent of St. Peter's, Vere Street.
- III. *The Atonement as a Fact and as a Theory.* By the Rev. Francis Garden, Sub-Dean of her Majesty's Chapels Royal.
- IV. *The Signs of the Kingdom of Heaven: an Appeal to Scripture upon the Question of Miracles.* By the Rev. John Llewelyn Davies, M.A., Rector of Christ Church, Marylebone.
- V. *On Terms of Communion:*
 1. *The Boundaries of the Church.* By the Rev. C. K. P.
 2. *The Message of the Church.* By J. N. Langley, M.A.
- VI. *The Sermon of the Bishop of Oxford on Revelation, and the Layman's Answer.*
 1. *A Dialogue on Doubt.* By J. M. Ludlow.
 2. *Morality and Divinity.* By the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Incumbent of St. Peter's, Vere Street.
- VII. *Two Lay Dialogues.* By J. M. Ludlow.
 1. *On Laws of Nature, and the Faith therein.*
 2. *On Positive Philosophy.*

London, Macmillan, 1861.

It is curious to remark the different effect of excitement from danger to the State and from danger to the Church. The former calls into action, even under absolute governments, generous and uniting passions, before which the lines of party disappear, and the spirit of forbearance and self-sacrifice rises to the ascendant. The latter, even in a free country, seems at once to awaken every dormant ecclesiastical egotism, to widen every difference, to intensify all dogmatism, and hoot down the catholic and charitable temper. In critical moments for the nation, Parliament knows how to suspend its inner conflicts, and take its measures with reticent dignity. In critical moments for the Church, her Councils and Convocations break into a Babel of contention, where only one thing is certain,—that new truth and gentle wisdom have no chance, but must leave the game to the wrangling of schoolmen, the chatter of popular preachers, the decorous spite of the scholar, and the arts of ecclesiastical diplomats. The recent panic occasioned by the volume of *Essays and Reviews* presents in general no exception to this

rule. Every party in the Church, every "denomination" beyond it, has endeavoured to turn the excitement to account, and make sectarian "capital" out of it. The Romanist takes the phenomenon as a fall of the mask from Protestantism: the Anglican, as proving the need of tradition in aid of Scripture: the Comtist, as an instalment of Positivism: the Evangelical, as betraying the cloven foot of "Neology:" the Unitarian,—affectionately embracing in their Oxford dress the daring heresies which he has frowned down in his own household,—as a homage, if not to his doctrines, at least to his method. To the "religious newspapers" the book was as great a godsend as a Garibaldi expedition or an American civil war to the *Times* in the long vacation. They have discussed it according to their nature. They are the modern receptacles of such debates as in other times found their centre in ecclesiastical assemblies. In their columns it is, that, in our days, a Nicolas of Myra must plant his fist in Arius's jaw: there, that an Athanasius must rage, and a Eusebius truckle: there, that the orthodox shout is raised to expel some obnoxious Theodoret: thence, that peaceable folks keep aloof, like Gregory Nazianzen from "the concourse of geese and cranes." They necessarily take the measure of every theological phenomenon from their own special and exclusive point of view; and, unless from the conflict or balance of opposite exaggerations, leave its true proportions no chance of coming out.

The *Tracts for Priests and People* form, in their whole tone and spirit, a marked exception to this disputatious partisanship. Proceeding from a well-known band of associates,—the *οἱ περὶ* Maurice,—they are not a manifesto in the interests of a school;—not a pious parody and coarse caricature set up as an altar-piece;—but a serious, manly, and large-hearted exposition of Christian faith, in its direct relations to human life. In religious depth and moral earnestness, in sympathetic appreciation of the doubts they would relieve, and in a certain openness to truth all round, they stand out in favourable contrast from the mass of literature on this *cause célèbre*. The writers, both clerical and lay, are free from the opposite disabilities of the men of mere thought and the men of mere action. Susceptible, like all persons of liberal culture, to the problems of the hour, they yet are not enclosed in any scientific clique or academic *officina*, where questions are got up and intellectual formulas hammered into shape; but are immersed in the real life of the world where these things appear in the working;—where distributed scepticism ferments in the actual character of the young and thoughtful, preying upon the spirits, unnerving the will;—and where, if class is separated from class, it is

not from political injustice, not from social inhumanity, but from the want of a common reverence uniting all in God. Greatly to the honour of this set of Churchmen it may be said, that no school, born so deep in the dim recesses of philosophy, ever emerged so soon into the light of action, or took on itself so faithfully the yoke of labour: it is truly a paradoxical paternity, by which Coleridge, with his subtle intellect and flabby will, becomes the father of a "*muscular* Christianity." The double interest which his representatives thus acquire in the religious problems of the day, by mental inheritance and by moral experience, gives to their words a peculiar weight. They are not intellectual cowards, afraid to face any real lights of knowledge, or to scrutinise the passing shades of doubt. Nor are they indifferent spectators of the mere play of thought among the thinkers; but in contact with its human results, nearer than less genial counsellors can be to the confessional of its struggles and its sorrows. In many respects, the *Tracts* speak in a way not unworthy of this advantageous position.

The characteristic theology of these writers has great resources for dealing with the wants and questionings of religious minds. Itself the product of a spiritual experience, which swept in Coleridge through all latitudes, and in Mr. Maurice has traversed no small arc, it is cognisant of dangers, and aware of safe and quiet channels, where a less searching survey fails to show them. The higher interpretation which it gives to most of the distinctive words and formulas of Church doctrine delivers them from many oppressive difficulties. The well-known explanation of the word "eternal," which lifts it out of the sphere of time, completely transforms the whole "heaven and hell" theology; wipes out the contrast between the present and the future life; and turns "salvation" into a spiritual emancipation, whether now or then, from whatever is contrary to God. We need not say how many gross pictures, at this single touch, vanish into air; how sentient pleasures and pains retire in shame before a more solemn reckoning; and how the suspicion falls to the ground at once that religion is but self-interest with a long look-out. The pravity of human nature returns within the limits of credible fact, when it is no longer "the sin of being born," but is construed into the inherent repugnance of Self to higher and rightful claims: and when, further, those higher claims themselves, as revealed to the soul within and embodied in the moral constitution of the world without, are resolved into the Personal communion with us of the Son's Divine Humanity, it becomes a matter of course to refer all our evil to ourselves, and all our good to what is beyond us. And if indeed there be this supernatural life underlying the natural,

realising the Order of a Perfect Will in the physical world, and pleading for its realisation in our free spirits,—if the phenomena of the visible universe and the march of history are but the external scenery and drama of this inner Divine Personality,—then Revelation is simply the emergence of the reality into knowledge: not a making of divine things (which, missed or seen, are always there), but a showing of them: not an exceptional *coup d'état* in the administration of the world, but an opened sample of its eternal laws. Even that the Son of God should take upon him a human individuality is but the manifesting climax of what, as abiding in our nature and originating all its good, he for ever partially does. And when his death is regarded simply as the uttermost surrender of a holy will, when its efficacy is sought, not in the penal virtue of its sufferings, but in the moral perfection of its obedience, and is found, not in the pacifying of God, but in the redeeming force of such self-sacrifice on man, the atonement itself does its best to return within the shelter of righteous law, and ceases to be a forensic insult and browbeating to the Conscience of mankind. Observe, finally, the proper meaning of the word "*Faith*," as determined by these antecedents. It is personal trust in the Divine Guide, who speaks with us in every higher claim;—a trust consciously exercised by the Christian, who discerns in the claim a living and a loving eye; unconsciously, by the righteous Pagan, who knows not the Person but reveres the Law. Salvation by Faith falls thus into coalescence with salvation by Obedience: only, that its true power first declares itself, when the impersonal Law breaks from its cloud and comes forth as the living God; when our surrender is one, not of constraint to a dead statute, but of free affection to an Almighty Guardian; when what else were Morality rises into Divinity. How different is this from that Salvation by dogma,—or, at all events, not without dogma,—which poisons the heart of almost every church, and is little else than Christendom's standing sin against the Holy Ghost! Is it wonderful that Mr. Maurice incessantly recurs,—perhaps not always pertinently,—to this distinction, radical to all religion, and scattering an infinitude of doubts, between opinion as critical assent to a proposition, and faith as moral reliance on a higher Person?

From this theology no more wise and welcome consequence flows than the erasure of the false distinction between secular and spiritual things. It is a distinction that has no root in reality, and lies only in our blindness or our vision. The world is divine, whether we see it or not: its common duties, its humblest work, the order of its affections, the hierarchy of its relations,—in the home, in the village, in the commonwealth,

in the family of nations,—are holy ordinances, the very sacraments of reality, alive with the Highest Presence: they are secular only to those from whom this truth is hid, and whom no secret awe deters from making them the field for the selfish play of humour, interest, or ambition. “There are not two moralities,”—one for nature, the other for grace: “Conversion” does not alter, but only reveal, a man’s spiritual obligations and position: it puts him into no divine kingdom, where he was not already: he stands in the same universe in which he stood before: only the scales have fallen from his eyes. That the new experience thus opened is wonderful, nay even a rebirth of the spirit, may be asserted with the Evangelical: yet that God’s grace is contingent on human consciousness and recognition may be denied with the Catholic. In this view, the world and the Church, labour and prayer, morals and religion, the life of nature and the life in God, merge into each other and are objectively one; and stand apart only through the subjective illusion of our darkness or our sin. This consecration of the common ground and work of our humanity relieves many a heart that vainly demands of itself the anguish and raptures of conviction, yet beats with a living pulse of righteousness, and flushes the cheek with joy in what is noble, pure, and true. In all these respects, the distinctive theology of our new “*Tractarians*” has hold of such deep truths, and stands clear of so many protests which strike home elsewhere, as to address itself with great advantage to the troubled faith of honest and serious minds. There are two forms of religious distress or dearth to which, especially, it brings infinite deliverance. First, where, as in Scotland, the Genevan “plan of salvation,”—with its corresponding plan of damnation,—has at last, by long hammering, broken through the logical crust, and pierced the heart, of humanity; an insurgent agony has arisen,—a fierce struggle between defiant denial and believing despair,—on which the gospel of this school opens as a tranquillising revelation, permitting hope and charity without forfeiture of faith and holiness. And, secondly, where a Deistical philosophy or a mere Historical theology had virtually set God away from the “here” and “now,” and, under prolonged drouth and famine of divine things, even delivered the prophet’s rod to Carlyle’s hand, to bring water from the rock and show the manna on the ground,—an unspeakable refreshment was brought by a theology which, also lifting the thick veil, showed not only a divine mystery and beauty, but the Living God himself, and re-baptised the present, not simply in wonder and reverence, but in the communion of trust and affection. The depth to which Mr. Maurice’s faith is penetrated with this truth,—of the immediate-

ness and perpetuity of the Divine self-witness,—betrays itself in a verbal peculiarity pervading his writings. In speaking of the acts and dealings of God, he is fond of substituting the continuous or progressive tense (is doing, was doing, will be doing) for the aorist (does, did, will do) in all the times; as if to preclude the idea of cessation, and to suspend us ever in the midst of the divine activities. Thus it is said, "God is manifesting himself," "is meeting" men, "is revealing to them what their character is" (No. II p. 8). The usage seems to be infectious, and, in other hands than Mr. Maurice's, spreads into new connexions, not without a disagreeable effect on the style of the writers. "Christ," says Mr. Hughes, of the miracles, "seems to me to *have been asserting* the freedom of that law of God by suspending these natural laws:" and, of the first chapter of Genesis,— "What impressed me most in it then was, the order and harmony of the whole, and the way in which every stage is *leading up* through man to God" (No. I. pp. 27, 29). The more we respect the origin of this habit of speech, the more should we regret its degenerating into even the appearance of affectation.

The writers of this school, guided by natural genius and the special work they have to do, have, with all their individual varieties, fallen into a certain *method* of their own. They are men of religious insight, of moral nobleness, of deep personal convictions: they have a message to deliver, and they deliver it; leaving it for the most part to bear its own testimony. It is to them *immediate* truth, which wants no mediation of theirs; let it only be laid out side by side with the alternative half-truths, or sham-truths, and it will make itself good, by simply being what *they* are not. Its persuasiveness consists in its answer to the inner need which it meets, and its faithful interpretation of the experience on which it falls. Beyond, therefore, its positive announcement, there is little further support given to it than a comparative portraiture, often contemptuous enough, of doctrines which would dispute its place. What vast power there may be in this mere exhibition of some gem of truth suspended in a gallery of counterfeits, is evident from the effect of Mr. Carlyle's writings, whose procedure is so far essentially the same. Such a method is quite adequate to the functions we have assigned to the Maurice theology. To the heart parched by the arid miseries of Calvinism, the simple offer of this theology is as the cup of cold water to the lips of fever. And so, when pure and susceptible natures have been permitted to grow up, stiff and stunted, in the frosts of Deistical exile, the mere approach of a mind charged with the living warmth of the Eternal Light,—the very gleam of its thoughts and tone of its words,—will

suffice to release and melt them into redemption. But there are limits to the force of simple enunciation, even of the highest truths. And when our authors, in their recoil from the formal dialectic of divinity, propose, as a kind of theory of method, to fall back in general on the delivery of a message and the proclamation of a creed, they overstrain the resources of mere statement, and underrate the complex exigencies of modern thought. The principle is thus laid down by Mr. Llewelyn Davies:

"If there is any truth in the Scriptures, His blessing will rest upon those who bring forward His gospel in advance of all arguments or traditions, even if they can do nothing but seriously repeat it, and trust to its being its own evidence. 'If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?' 'We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' 'By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'" (No. IV. p. 33.)

Though this is justly enough advanced as a reason for not staking the gospel-appeal on any management of the miracle-argument, it is evident from the following illustration that Mr. Davies gives the principle a wider application:

"Professor Stanley, in his interesting account of the Nicæan Council, relates two stories, which, whether they are true, or whether they express a conviction in the mind of the Church, are almost equally instructive. Many popular discussions of doctrine took place, he says, previously to the formal opening of the Council. In one of these, after divines had been endlessly disputing, a layman stepped forward, and abruptly said, 'Christ and the apostles left us, not a system of logic, nor a vain deceit, but a naked truth, to be guarded by faith and good works.' On another occasion, a heathen philosopher had been contending with learned Christians, and had always slipped, *velut anguis lubricus*, out of the grasp of their arguments. An aged confessor hereupon stepped forth to meet him. 'In the name of Jesus Christ,' he said, 'hear me, philosopher. There is one God, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: Who made all things by the power of His Word, and by the holiness of His Holy Spirit. This Word, by which name *we* call the Son of God, took compassion on men for their wandering astray, and for their savage condition, and chose to be born of a woman, and to converse with men, and to die for them; and he shall come again to judge every one for the things done in this life. These things we believe without curious inquiry.' After a few more direct words like these, the philosopher yielded. 'Hear,' he said, 'my learned friends. So long as it was a matter of words, I opposed words to words; and whatever was spoken, I overthrew by my skill in speaking; but when, in the place of words, power came out of the speaker's lips, words could no longer resist power, man could no longer resist. If any of you felt as I have felt, let him believe in Christ, and

let him follow this old man in whom God has spoken.' (*Eastern Church*, p. 132.)

It would be foolish, no doubt, to imagine that unbelievers may be captured by a *coup de main*, through the mere reiteration of any such simple statements. But it is not foolish to bring out the unspeakable importance of giving due prominence to the simplest affirmation of what God is, and what He has done for men." (No. IV. p. 33.)

Notwithstanding the qualifying clause by which the author guards his rule, we think the reliance of these *Tracts* on the *coup-de-main* method quite excessive, and especially unsuited to the occasion which has called them forth. They professedly deal with the crisis evoked by the *Essays and Reviews*, and cannot but intend to throw some light upon the questions which that volume raises. Those questions are all of them seated pretty deep in the philosophy of religion, and the researches of biblical and historical criticism. The relation between the inner course of Hebrew history and the outer lines of Heathendom; the real meaning, true or false, of the Mosaic account of the Creation; the discord or harmony of science and faith; the existence and purport of Messianic predictions; the credibility and function of the Scripture miracles; the age and authorship of the several New Testament books; their consistency or discrepancy in narrative and doctrine; the right procedure for their true interpreter; the nature and limits of their authority:—these are topics on which it is vain to pronounce by simple affirmation; which cannot be referred to the inner response of conscience; which remain undetermined in the face of the deepest sense of the Living God; and on which the truth can be approached only by the patient skill of the critic, and the combinations of a thorough philosophy. Yet in the *Tracts* before us, only one of these questions,—viz. that raised by Mr. Baden Powell, as to the relation between Natural and Supernatural Order,—is treated with any thing like a reasoned discussion,—first, in its relation to the miracles, by Mr. Davies, and then, in relation to kosmical law as grounded in Will, by Mr. Ludlow. Both these writers show a respectful appreciation of their subject, and contribute thoughtful and suggestive essays. But from none of their associates will "Priests and People," puzzled by the *Essays and Reviews*, gain the slightest help, beyond the comfort of knowing what Mr. Hughes believes, and what "lessons" Mr. Maurice draws from the seven treatises, and the panic, and the quarterly Reviews, and the Bishop of Oxford and his Lay Critic, and the remaining elements of the crisis. Personal confessions of faith, whatever their autobiographical interest, and homiletic comments, however true their spirit, on what we want to be told and what we

do not want, contribute nothing to the solution of any pending difficulty. The influence which they may exert,—that of sympathy and spiritual response,—can operate only in the way of diversion from the problems of fact and thought, whence the whole ferment comes. We are perpetually referred to the “Living Witness and Interpreter” of Divine things. That “Living Witness” we reverently own. But, for all that, the chronology and incidents of Matthew’s and Luke’s Introductions remain at variance; Galatians and Acts stand at issue as before; the Last Supper cannot both have been and not have been the Passover; and the prophecies of the Second Coming passed their date and outlived their meaning without fulfilment. In such matters there is no diviner interpreter than the pure and single eye of a truthful spirit, that can see things as they are, and has no optical tricks for either severing the harmonious or blending the contradictory. Mr. Maurice, addressing his brother clergymen, says :

“Why waste the short time in which you are able to work in speculation? Why argue and debate, when you might proclaim good news to your fellow-creatures? You talk of the value of testimony and antiquity in establishing certain propositions. Cannot you trust God to testify of them as He did of old? You say the evidence of miracle and prophecy is conclusive. Let it be conclusive. Then speak out the conclusion. Set forth the miracles as they are set forth in the Gospel, as witnesses of Christ’s kingdom over men. Study the prophets, and learn what words they spoke to the people in their day respecting the living God and His government over men. See whether their words are not mightier than all the evidences that have been deduced from them.” (No. II. p. 20.)

Excellent advice for an undoubting clergy among an undoubting—though it may be a heedless—people!—only, in that case, quite superfluous, since such a clergy are not given to “speculate,” or at all slow to “proclaim.” But, as a remedy for shaken or undetermined belief, as an escape from the perception of difficulties and the force of discovery, the course recommended is morally irrelevant;—ineffectual, if applied to a questioning people; if followed by a questioning clergy, dishonest. Were Mr. Maurice consulted by persons in doubt about the “Resurrection of the body,”—still more, had it lost (as is understood to be the case with many German divines) its decisive hold upon his own faith,—we are sure he would not be content to go on “proclaiming;” he would not set aside “antiquity” and its witnesses, in expectation that “God would testify;” he would have to “argue,” probably even to “speculate;” and would find that a faith, once disturbed by legitimate intellectual processes, can be reinstated only by resort to them

again. It has been said, in benevolent apology for Mr. Spurgeon's pulpit style, "True, it has its taint of vulgarity: but vulgar people exist, and must have their religion." It seems to be forgotten at the other end that men of letters and science exist, that hosts of academic and professional youth exist, and, being human, must have their religion. The culture of the age preoccupies their minds with habits of thought variously traversing the "message" of the Church, and with many distinct objections to parts of the Bible and the creed. Is no notice to be taken of this state of mind? Do you expect that, on hearing the message, it will die out of itself? Will you treat it as a delirium,—as a mere fretful illusion,—to be coaxed into cure by changing the subject and speaking home to another part of the nature? Or is all sympathy to be withheld from the mental strife of the intellectual classes? and are they to limp on as they can in the rear of a faith, that will not turn its face to answer them a word?

We should better understand the attitude of our "Tractarians" towards questions of critical and scientific theology, if their own faith were unconcerned in the issue of such inquiries. If they were prepared to say outright, "The Living Witness will in any case suffice for us: we want no outward testimony from other times to tell us what we know: be the Bible what it may, we love it simply because it communes with us in spirit and draws from us a deep response: but the revelation of God is eternal and depends on no book;" then certainly, critical problems would be indifferent to them; they might look past them, as not in the line of their religion; and very properly use such language as the following from the *Religio Laici*:

"Men may satisfy themselves,—perhaps, if I have time to give to the study, they may satisfy me,—that the Pentateuch was the work of twenty men; that Baruch wrote a part of Isaiah; that David did not write the Psalms, or the Evangelists the Gospels; that there are interpolations here and there in the originals; that there are numerous and serious errors in our translation. What is all this to me? What do I care who wrote them, what is the date of them, what this or that passage ought to be? They have told me what I wanted to know. Burn every copy in the world to-morrow, you don't and can't take that knowledge from me, or any man. I find them *all* good for me; so, as long as a copy is left, and I can get it, I mean to go on reading them all, and believing them all to be inspired." (No. I. p. 25.)

If Mr. Hughes can be so independent of the date and authorship of historical books like the Gospels, he cannot, one would suppose, be particular about the trustworthiness of their narrative parts: for this surely depends a little upon the age

and person of the historian. However much the portraiture and words of Christ may carry their own credentials, the record of what happened to him,—the birth and infancy, the death and resurrection,—owes all its value to the testimony on which it rests: and loses its historical character if, instead of being contemporary and first-hand, it is the work of later anonymous compilers. Yet, with strange inconsistency, the author who is so free and easy with the witnesses, and cares not to ask who they are, rests his whole faith upon the thing attested—viz. that the Son of God became incarnate, being “conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.” He distinctly says, “The Incarnation is for me the support of all personal holiness, and the key to human history” (p. 19). Is it nothing to him, then, from what hand he receives this key? Does he hold it as a mere working *hypothesis*, which, once started in the dark, recommends itself sufficiently by fitting the phenomena? Or, resting on it as a Divine *fact*, known historically or else not known at all, can he be indifferent to its solidity? Nor, considering the extent of the prophetic element in Scripture, can we understand how the “date” of books can be a small matter to an author who evidently identifies prophecy with prediction. How but by “date” do we know real fore-announcement from *vaticinia post eventum*? The truth is, this school has never succeeded in settling accounts between the Eternal Divine facts spiritually revealed by the ever-living Witness, and the historical phenomena of the past, which, however connected with religion, are cognisable only through human testimony. In the joy of having found the former, even Mr. Maurice forgets the different tenure of the latter, involves them in the same feeling and treatment, as if they, too, were entities, apprehensible to-day, independently of yesterday, and free from the contingencies of probable evidence. He wraps up in the same folds of ontological language the purely spiritual and the simply historical elements of the creed: with the tacit feeling and assumption that the permanent carries the transitory not only into being, but into knowledge. The Personal life of God in the world, of which his sense is so deep, seems to guarantee for him the particular Divine acts and manifestations enumerated in the Scriptures or the formularies of the Church: and his one standing appeal to us is,—“Believe in Him who is signified, and you will believe the signs.” Yet it is plain that no prior apprehension of God would enable us to divine, before they came, the forms in which his agency would express itself; or, after they have come and been reported, to separate the threads of reality from those of fiction in a narrative of mixed tissue. For knowledge

of the Divine events, taken one by one, we are not less dependent on human attestation, than for the biography of an Emperor or an Apostle: and it is vain to treat them as if they were deducibles from the primary spiritual truth, and sure to stand or fall with it. Frequent as this assumption is in the Maurician writings, there are times when the reasoning is just inverted; and we are told that, did we not know the facts enumerated in the Apostles' Creed, we should have no escape from atheism or pantheism. If so, the premisses of all religion are historical, not spiritual: the most tremendous consequences are staked upon the security of the history: and, in place of indifference or disparagement towards a testing criticism, a consistent believer will rather hang upon its processes with vigilance at once anxious and hopeful. Our authors play fast and loose with these opposite lines of thought: at one time saying, "Let the critics have their way; God lives and will witness to Himself;" at another, "Take away from us the story of the miraculous conception, and we are stripped of our belief in a Living God."

It has always been the favourite logic of divines,—“Take your choice: either with us, or without God:” though nine-tenths of the thoughtful portion of mankind have variously ranged themselves between the atheist and the orthodox, and made the interval habitable at innumerable points. Our new Tractarians, we regret to observe, are not ashamed of again plying the worn-out dilemma, and using the hobgoblin of Positivism, to drive people to the asylum of the Nicene Creed. “Which you please,” they say to us, “either dead laws, or the Incarnation.” Mr. Hughes distinctly asserts,—“With our Lord must go all belief in a personal God” (p. 14); and what he means by “our Lord,” is evident at once from the connexion, and from the following paragraph:

“This loyalty I could never have rendered, no man can ever render, I believe, except to a Son of man. He must be perfect man as well as perfect God to satisfy us—must have dwelt in a body like ours, have felt our sorrows, pains, temptations, weaknesses. He was incarnate by the Spirit of God of the Virgin. In this way I can see how he was indeed perfect God and perfect Man. I can conceive of no other in which he could have been so. The Incarnation is for me the support of all personal holiness, and the key to human history” (p. 19).

This astounding claim for the Incarnation,—that it alone discloses the personality of God,—has often been advanced by writers like Dr. Newman (see his *University Sermons*), who make all determinate religion a matter of external authority: but comes strangely enough from those who insist on the eter-

nal self-witness of God. We protest against its levity and rashness. If it be true, our escape from "dead laws" is indeed precarious. For there is no guarantee for the alternative doctrine except the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke; whose narratives contain in themselves, and play off against each other, every conceivable difficulty that can bring suspicion on an historical relation: they contradict each other's chronology, genealogy, geography, and whole substance as well as order of both natural and supernatural events: they stand at variance with authentic secular history: they are without support from the other evangelists, even him who had taken Mary to his home; and reappear in no subsequent allusion throughout the New Testament writings, not excepting the very gospels in which they are found. Narratives of this kind, strongly impressed with a legendary character, in which nameable angels appear upon the scene, and men and women speak off-hand in original hymns, and public as well as private miracles surround the person of the future Saviour with an insulating glory, entail, if received, insuperable difficulties on the subsequent history, or, if critically examined, suffer greatly by comparison with it. Not produced till more than half a century from the incidents they report, not pretending to come from contemporary witnesses, though full of detail and speeches which even first-hand testimony could scarcely authenticate, they cannot for a moment be put upon the same footing with the accounts of the ministry of Christ. Yet this is the chosen ground on which to rest the foundation of all religion! The assurance of a personal God is to stand or fall with the massacre of the Innocents and the census of Quirinus!

But further, the plainest facts refute this claim for the Incarnation. Had the Jewish people, prior to the Advent, no knowledge of a personal God? Does the human conscience bear no witness to his Moral Government? and have the wise Heathens only dreamt, whom the shadow of guilt or the authority of goodness has startled into this belief? And surely the Apostle Paul was neither pantheist nor atheist: yet there is not the slightest reason to attribute to him the doctrine expressed in the words, "conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." On this point, indeed, there is more than the negative evidence of silence. Both of the human lineage of Christ, and of the Spirit's relation to him, the Apostle speaks in terms which exclude the idea of miraculous conception: "The Son of God," he says (Rom. i. 3, 4), "*sprung from the seed of David according to the flesh*" (requiring Joseph as connecting link), and "declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness from the resurrection of the dead."

Here are both the human sonship left to the course of natural descent, and the divine sonship through the Spirit referred not to the birth, but to the resurrection. In this we have perhaps the earliest conception of the union between the divine and the human in the person of Christ. By all who received him, he was owned under the Messianic title of "Son of God;" and this eminence was referred by all to the higher principle within him known as the "Holy Spirit." But as to the specific time and mode in which this higher principle claimed him, and the phenomena which most characteristically manifested it, a succession of different conceptions are found within the limits of the New Testament. First, and naturally with those on whose horizon it burst with all its glory, the Resurrection was the date and inauguration of his Sonship, the transcendent expression of the living and life-giving Spirit within him, by which he became the Head of an immortal, as Adam of the mortal, humanity. In this view, nothing prior to the Resurrection need have more than a human character and a moral significance. We have here the sense in which the greater and indisputable epistles of St. Paul were written: later some new elements must have entered his doctrine, if the letters to the Philipians, Ephesians, and Colossians are really his. The position of the personal companions of Jesus was different. Looking back from their final eminence on that ministry of his, which they had been so slow of heart to interpret at the time, they could not but remember how many signs it gave forth of the same Spirit of holy power which at last broke the bonds of death; and they would take delight in recalling the divine gleams that escaped from beneath the folds of his humility, and betrayed him as already marked out for the functions awaiting him. Hence by them the inaugural point was fetched back to a prior date; and the Spirit was held to have rested on him and claimed him as the "Son of God" already at the Baptism. But are, then, the previous thirty years to be left on the village level, and awaken no surmise and make no sign? Some there were who said that his childhood was not without its signal marks of grace; who doubted whether his nature was like that of other men; and thought he might have been the "Son of God" from the first and in a more literal sense than had hitherto been supposed. This idea of a physical Sonship, dispensing with one human parent, and involving an exceptional nature, constitutes a third stage of doctrine; of which there is no vestige in the New Testament except in the introductions to Matthew and Luke. Thus far we are still without any hint of a *pre-existent* Sonship; the interpretations severally select the Resurrection, the Baptism, the Birth; but they remain within

the limits of this life; even the last, explaining, as it does, by what *genesis* Jesus becomes the "Son of God," shuts the door of the past against that character. The final escape of the title from historical date into transcendental preëxistence was effected when the doctrine of the Logos had come into contact with the recorded life of Christ, and applied its solvent and transmuting power upon his words and deeds and person. His continued existence in heaven demanded new forms of expression to mark his Sonship there. So long as he was on earth, the visible Agent and subject of divine acts, it was enough to refer to the "Holy Spirit" as constituting him "Son of God:" the more so as he had it "without measure," and it centred all in him, and to others "it had not come, because he was not yet glorified." The "Holy Spirit," however, always means the *phenomenal* Divine power, as it breaks into immediate consciousness or expression; and ceases to give an appropriate account of one who has been lifted from the world of manifestation to the world of eternal realities. Besides, it was the disciples left behind who were now the organs of the Holy Spirit: from his glorified person it was so far released and sent down upon them, that it was now no longer the distinction of his individuality, but common to both spheres,—its potential source above, its actual work below. In this generalisation and diffusion of the "Spirit," a need arose of some other conception to mark, with strict limitation to himself, the higher principle which still and for ever constituted his Sonship. The conception of the Logos supplied the want: the expressible nature of God, that whereby he thinks and speaks himself into other minds, and especially passes into communion with humanity, might well be discerned as the Divine side of the exalted Christ by those to whom he had made life holy. In this form, his Sonship escaped into supra-mundane time,—became a continuous and undated fact,—and only dipped down through the shadows of Incarnation, to be the link between humanity and God. The Johannine "Word made flesh," however, involves no miraculous conception, or birth from a Virgin. It belongs to a totally different order of ideas. Human parentage does not stand in its way. The Logos, the source of *all* life, can pass into possession of this individual life by its own ways of silent order. The whole drift of the fourth gospel is to blend all spiritual individuals in one, to recognise their sameness of nature with Christ, and extend common predicates to all. Its doctrine turns upon the contrast, not of human and divine, but of diabolical and divine; the human being the neutral theatre for both. The result, on the other hand, of the Incarnation in Luke is the birth of an exceptional being contrasted in the composition of his personality with the race

to which he comes. *They* can never be sons of God in the sense in which *he* is : yet this, which Luke's Incarnation excludes, is the sole end contemplated in John's.

Thus, within the Christian Scriptures themselves, there are no fewer than four different modes of conceiving the union of divine and human elements in Christ. Of these, two involve no Incarnation, and a third no superhuman birth. On the remaining one, incomparably the most questionable, Mr. Hughes rashly seizes, and makes it the sole foundation for that faith in a personal God which in fact equally belongs to all the rest.

Further, we must confess our inability to perceive the logical connexion between the assumed fact and the deduced truth. What is meant, we presume, is, that in the figure of Jesus Christ, historical and human, yet sprung from the Holy Spirit, God *visibly became a Person*. True ; but this is so far from implying an Eternal Personality, that it rather suggests the idea of a transitory phase of existence, into which and out of which an impersonal Infinite might pass. And accordingly the notion of Incarnation has always been distinctive, not of monotheistic faiths, which attribute intense character and will to the object of worship, but of pantheistic religions, which cannot for ever rest in their fundamental negation of personality, but are obliged to let their Divine Essence come up now and then, and culminate in individuality and self-consciousness. Nor is any thing more certain in the history of early Christianity than that the Athanasian doctrine was the final result of the influx of *Gentile* modes of thought, and was resisted at every stage by the rigid Theism of the Judaic Christians, till the last remnant of the original Messianic believers was lost. We are far from affirming that the infusion of new elements from the Hellenic world was, on the whole, a loss rather than a gain of truth. But, certainly, its secure hold of the faith in a personal God the Christian Church owes to its Jewish descent, and possesses, not in consequence, but in spite of, its doctrine of Incarnation.

And now, having set aside what we deem a mistaken claim for this doctrine, we are free to acknowledge and define a juster one. Belief in it could hardly be so persistent and passionate, could hardly breathe so continuously through the poetry, the art, the devotion of Christendom, had it not roots deeper than the accidental soil of tradition. Doubtless, it embodies a truth, though Mr. Hughes has named the wrong one ; a truth, more purely distinctive of Christianity than his. Of Heathen religion, the motto, we may say, was God in Nature ; of Christian, it is God in Man ; of Jewish, God *over* both. The Scriptures every where—Old and New—place the universal centre

of gravity, round which the Providential scheme revolves, not in the Kosmos, but in Humanity: only, Man who in the Hebrew religion is the fabricated creature—the disposable servant—of an Almighty Maker, becomes, in the Christian, the filial partaker of the Divine nature, and drawn, through the sympathies of a common righteousness, into communion with God, not of outward converse only, but of inward life. The new revelation of Him who is “Spirit” presents Him, not separate at a sovereign interval from a long hierarchy of distinct species of intelligence below, but as the essence of holy life in all minds, the light to which they secretly aspire, the spring of love by which they break from self to reach it. This truth, this sense of reconciled approach,—of discovered affinity,—of blended life,—between Man and God, is what gives its real interest to the doctrine of Incarnation. The ecclesiastical battle respecting it raged apparently around the person of Christ: but he stood for our humanity at large: and the claim made for him, that he was the meeting-point of two natures,—that his personality was incompletely thought, unless identified in its ground with God’s essence, while living all the life of an historical individual,—was in reality preferred on our behalf. In him the links were found for connecting two extremes, not ready else to detect the joy of their immediate relation. Held within the Divine nature, on the one hand, and never, as Arius affirmed, detached into creaturely existence, he was in absolute union with the Father: having, on the other, the type and experience of Human nature, he was joined to us by the hand of brotherhood: and the upward and downward sympathy together bound heaven and earth by a chain of affinity unfelt before. That which prevented this double relation from being limited to the individuality of Christ,—that which associated our humanity at large with it, and made us also of twofold nature,—was the “Holy Spirit,” whereby the Divineness broke away, as it were, from exclusive connexion with the person of the Saviour, and spread as a flame of new and holy life through the souls of men. The fresh fields of consciousness, the large horizon of affection, that opened before minds caught in this heavenly contagion, were equivalent to the gain of a higher nature,—a rebirth into another world; though, in truth, there was no objective change in the constitution of God’s universe, but simply a waking up to wonders that were always there. It is a poor self-knowledge that stops with the knowledge of self: and this narrow bound was now passed, and the discovery made how much we must affirm to be human without denying it to be divine; how the shadow of our personal sins will not stay here upon the ground, but while clinging to our feet will overshoot the

brink into the infinite air ; how the light of our secret conscience is but refracted from a flood of Righteousness beyond. This truth is the final fruit of the doctrine of Incarnation ; short of which it yields nothing but a crude and barren wonder ; but ripening which, its work is done and its season near its close. For spiritual truth, once reached, has its own living witness ; and having found its eternal strength, turns round and gives an interpreting support to the very history or phenomena which have served as its germ. The Incarnation is true, not of Christ exclusively, but of Man universally, and God everlastingly. He bends into the human, to dwell there : and humanity is the susceptible organ of the divine. And the spiritual light in us which forms our higher life is "of one substance" (ὁμοούσιον) with his own Righteousness,—its manifestation, with unaltered essence and authority, on the theatre of our nature. All minds are of one species,—or rather concur in transcending the limits of species ; all, as Plato said, feed upon the same aliment, the true, the right, the beautiful, the good ; and that aliment itself is the very "bread of heaven," the essential life of spirit every where, in its Source and in its distribution. And however our abstract names may parcel or disguise it, and make it seem like a thing or thought of ours, it is God's eternal imparting of Himself to those who may grow into his likeness. Of this grand and universal truth Christ became the revealer, not by being an exceptional personage (who could be a rule for nothing), but by being a signal instance of it, so intense and impressive as to set fire to every veil that would longer hide it. He was not unnaturally taken for the objective cause of that indwelling of the Divine in the human which he revealed, and by revealing indefinitely deepened and increased. And it was in the interests of this supposition,—in order to qualify his personality for so changing the constitution of the moral world,—that the theory of the double nature, as special to him, was wrought out. Take away its physical elements, remove its speciality, affirm it of humanity in general, and of him as its revealing representative ; and the same truth assumes its permanent form, rescued from questionable history and arbitrary dogma, and secured by the living testimony of God's Spirit in the heart of man.

What we find, then, in reading the *Tracts for Priests and People* is this. The authors have hold of very momentous truths ; appreciate them justly in their application ; feel them deeply in their true ground ; but, in stating or deducing them, try to get them out of ecclesiastical premisses so utterly precarious in themselves and so illogically prefixed, as to endanger and perplex the lessons they wish to teach. They read into

the Creed many a thought far richer and truer than its words contain : and for their private peace and guidance this is well ; quickening old and venerable forms ; and permitting the fresh flow of veracious faith within the consecrated channel. But when, for the conviction of others, the thought has to be taken out again, it becomes evident that it is not there ; that its presence has been simulated by a subjective illusion ; and that when it is summoned to come forth, it is the ventriloquist himself who both gives it the call, and answers to its name. The most astonishing instance of this phenomenon is, perhaps, in the attempt to extract the Maurician doctrine of Atonement, which attributes efficacy to the holy obedience, not to the incurred sufferings of Christ, and expends that efficacy entirely upon the human side, from the 2d Church Article, which says not a word of either the obedience of Christ or the remedied alienation of man, but declares that the Son "truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." This is not an ambiguous statement : and it affirms precisely the propositions which, in defining their doctrine, our authors are most careful to disclaim. When, again, the 31st Article says that "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual ; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone : " when, further, it draws the inference that "the Sacrifice of Masses" are "blasphemous fables ;"—it is plain that the offering of Christ is assumed to do at a stroke *the very same thing* to which the Mass pretended day by day,—i.e. propitiate an alienated God,—by presenting a substitute for human obedience, or conversely, a "*satisfaction* for" human sin. Can any thing be more hopeless than the attempt to expel from this phraseology the idea of vicarious righteousness, and Divine claims bought off ? Is not that idea the very pith of all "orthodox" theology ? Is not the whole worship of the Western Church an attempt of the disciple to screen himself behind an acceptable Name, and put forward, as his only plea and protection, an obedience that has been rendered for him ? Yet Mr. Garden, who, like Mr. Maurice and Mr. Davies, is in moral revolt against this rude and barbarous idea, discovers that its phraseology is "expressive of a great truth :"

"Christ's sacrifice of Himself was indeed a *satisfaction* to Divine justice, and that in a far higher sense than is furnished by any mere notions of paying a debt, or enduring a penalty. The Righteousness of God has an entire satisfaction in the work of Christ Jesus. The Supreme Reason, the Perfect Mind of the Father, sees there that on

which He can pour forth a full tide of complacency and approval. There were barriers which the Divine justice no doubt placed between God and sinful man; for perfect justice can never be on terms with sin; can never call things other than what they are; can adopt no legal fiction in order to treat the sinner as if he were not a sinner. Those barriers are broken down by Christ's sacrifice. Man is thereby brought to God. God's justice sees Man presented to Him, such as He designed Man to be, and is satisfied. The sin of the world is taken away, and all who will avail themselves of it, can occupy a position in which Man is righteous, and may serve God in holiness and righteousness, without fear." (No. II. p. 21.)

The word "satisfaction" may undoubtedly be used simply for "approval" and "complacency," or for the object of such feeling: and if nothing more were said than that the offering of Christ was a satisfaction to God, the phrase might mean only that God approved the offering. But "satisfaction *for*" an offence is an approval complicated by reference to an antecedent relation: it is a complacency compensating and discharging a prior displeasure: and if the displeasure rested upon one person, while the complacency is directed on another, the "offering" is vicarious. On this point the Article leaves no doubt: the sins are Men's; the offering is Christ's: the consequent transition from displeasure to complacency is God's. Yet this is the text from which Mr. Garden can dislodge all doctrine of substitution, and extract a "great truth" completely at variance with it!

We must accept it, however, as a law of theological advance, however humbling to our ideal of Christian simplicity, that the authoritative text of the past will long be stretched and strained with the expanding pressure of new thought, before it sets the prisoner free to build around it the organism of its future life. If our Tractarians can convince "priests and people" that the Church does not encourage the idea of Christ's doing our Divine relations for us, or redeeming us otherwise than by assimilation to his self-sacrifice, they will abuse the license of interpretation to good effect, and deliver the religion they teach from a reproach else fatal to it. They have repeatedly stated, with irresistible force, the moral objections to the theory of "Satisfaction:" and the only question is, whether, in the residuary doctrine which they retain, innocent as it is of affront to the conscience, there is a real truth for thought and heart to grasp, or only a semblance to engage and dignify phraseology that cannot be dismissed. That doctrine, if we rightly understand our authors' not very precise expositions of it, is briefly summed up in the following propositions.

Sacrifice, in its essential idea, is simply the offering of a *gift*,

as an expression of homage: the material object presented being but the symbol of that *self-surrender* to a holy will, which alone has reality with God. In Christ, symbol and reality coalesce: in his hand is no gift save *Himself*,—himself always, utterly, to the last extremity, given up to the all-righteous Will. In this—his perfect and unreserved obedience—lies the whole essence of his sacrifice. The element of mere suffering—the humiliation of the cross—has no separate significance, apart from the whole spiritual life of which it is the climax. It simply measures the intensity of the self-dedication, or rather, shows that its measure could not be found. The offering, as proceeding from Christ, *was a perfect obedience*.

That such an offering, as received by a Holy God, should find acceptance, needs no explanation. But how is it “a propitiation for the sins of the whole world”? To this question we find the following answer: that which Christ presented spotless before his Father was *human nature*,—for he was human: human nature, therefore, now that its ideal was realised, became well-pleasing in the sight of God: and we who are samples of it are included in this complacency. So far, there would seem to be ascribed to the Christian sacrifice an effect other than on us, viz. a conciliated sentiment, on the part of God, towards humanity as a Kind.

Yet on this Divine side of the Reconciliation we do not find our authors relying for any benefit to us men, so long as we, on our part, are unaffected by the persuasive efficacy of Christ's offering. Not till love and faith draw us into a like spirit of self-sacrifice are we partakers in its blessing. Redemption there is none from penalty while guilt remains; nor may we call any one our Saviour, except in so far as he has delivered us from the sinful affections that carry their eternal penalties within them. So, in its human aspect, the Atonement consists, not in any substitution of Christ's obedience, but in assimilation to it.

That this statement is not incorrect will perhaps be sufficiently apparent from the following extract:

“At last comes one in whom the matter of the oblation and the form are united; Whose gift is the inward essential sacrifice; Who said, Lo, I come to do Thy Will. And He does it perfectly. The gift of His own Will and of His own Being to the Will of His Father is entire and flawless. There is no point at which the offerer pauses. The self-surrender stays not till the very life has been offered. The obedience is carried on until it becomes an obedience unto death. Short of that point, the sacrifice would not have been complete; there would have been something kept back. But all is complete; nothing is kept back; all faith in, and all love to the eternal Father, all sym-

pathy with the brethren, receive their full expression in the sacrifice which began with the utterance, *Lo, I come*; and was consummated when Jesus bowed His head and gave up the ghost. In gazing on that, we are gazing on the Only Gift ever offered to God, which, for its own sake, God could regard with complacency; in which, for its own sake, God could take delight. And we may see how the union of Christ with His brethren renders this gift propitiatory in its effects upon them. For it is human nature which He has offered up in spotless sacrifice to the Father; the whole race is represented in Him. He is the Head and the Root of all mankind. Therefore, mankind now stands accepted before God, and every sharer in the kind may at once plead and occupy the righteous position which has been won for it by the accepted sacrifice of its great Representative." (No. II. p. 17.)

Now there are two points which we cannot understand in this theory: viz. (1) the place it assigns to the *death* of Christ; (2) the extension to men in general of God's complacency in him personally.

(1) The cross, it is admitted, is but the consummation of a perfect self-devotion, extending no less through a whole previous life, but then at last meeting its supreme test. It is not the *sentient endurance*, but the *moral rightness*, of that death, which constitutes its essence and whole power. What, then, made it right, and set it in the pathway of a holy obedience, so that it could not righteously be avoided? What Law of God required it? It was either voluntary,—positively chosen as an end; or involuntary,—negatively incurred, as incident to a career having ends that came across it. If the former, the Moral claim for it is relinquished: for death, embraced as an end, is simply suicide, and, instead of fulfilling, violates the Divine Law. If the latter, it needs to be shown under what moral exigency, in the discharge of what duty, it was encountered. Till this is done, it escapes appreciation by the Conscience, and is dishonoured by vain words of reverence: and when this is done, it surely loses the mysterious character assigned to it, and becomes simply the supreme case of martyrdom. For what *is* martyrdom, but death incurred in preference to the denial of truth or the evasion of some righteous claim? Are our authors content with this description of the cross? Placing its sanctity and acceptableness on no magical ground, but on the same footing with the whole devoted life which preceded it, they ought to set it in the clear light of real human obligation; to show what pure affection required it, what authoritative call would have been disregarded in declining it. They seem to us to speak as if self-sacrifice had some holy character and efficacy of its own, apart

from the righteous claim in fidelity to which it is freely incurred; as if Christ even made it *his end to show us the path of self-sacrifice*:—an end that must defeat itself; since, by its presence, it would convert his act into the empty spectacle of throwing himself away; instead of illustrating the solemn conflicts of inward allegiance in which life itself must yield. If there is to be any reality in his self-surrender on Calvary, if it is to prevail over us by any true appeal, it must have an intelligible character of its own, either as an inseparable part of a life faithful to its highest inspiration, or as having some separate end justifying and consecrating the sacrifice. We consult our authors in vain for an answer to the question, what was the problem which required Christ to die? They reject the plain answer of most divines,—“to divert to himself the penalties of men’s sins.” They do not really mean to sanction the theatrical doctrine of “example.” They would probably shrink from reducing the case to that of martyrdom. Yet they throw the whole stress of the offering upon its *moral* element of intrinsic rightness, and recall it from the realm of the magical to the region of *character*. They cut off the mass of arbitrary consequences appended by the ordinary forensic theory to the death on Calvary: yet transfer to their own simple and spiritual view the mystic elevation of language which belongs only to what they have left behind. They never escape the vicious circle: the cross was holy, because it was endured to save mankind: and it saves mankind, by being holy. In the one proposition, they pay homage to theological fiction: in the other, to moral and historical truth. It is a vain attempt to serve both masters.

(2) The extension of God’s complacency in Christ’s offering over the whole of mankind is unexplained; and, we venture to add, inexplicable without resuming the very principle of substitution which has been discarded. He offered, it is said, *our nature* spotless before heaven, and made it acceptable again. Yes; but God’s displeasure was not—no *moral* displeasure can be—against a *Nature*: it was, and is, and ever must be, only against the unfaithful *Will*: and the Wills of men are not *generic*, but *individual*: they cannot be fused together into a representative type,—himself also a free personality,—and change from deformity to beauty, with the Light of his life. The obedience of Christ was the obedience, not of *humanity*, but of a man,—of his own individual soul, in dealing with the special problems, the incommunicable responsibilities, the lonely sorrows and temptations, of a life particular and even unique: and to extend it beyond this personal circle, to speak as if, by merely being human, Pontius Pilate and Caligula and Messalina and

Borgia acquired a share in it, and lay less deep within the shadow of God's disapproval, is to contradict the inalienableness of all moral trusts, and make character vicarious. As well might you say, conversely, that the guilt of Judas Iscariot was the guilt of "human nature," and must have made us all odious in the sight of heaven. There are some departments of thought in which, we believe, Mr. Maurice's Platonic Realism has a just application. But against its entrance on the region of the Conscience and gathering up our infinitely distributed trusts into an incarnate *εἶδος* of humanity, we must earnestly protest. Obligation cannot be discharged by deputy; cannot be met but in the concrete. Christ, as obedient and holy in his humanity, was one man: and we are *other* men: and no "propitiation for *our* sins" can be got out of *his* righteousness, without removing the essence of all moral distinctions whatsoever.

In our authors' doctrine, then, on this ancient subject, we find the old phenomenon repeated: it is clear and sound in what it removes; confused and incomprehensible in what it retains. It is no wonder. Theological literature is one protracted testimony to the unmanageableness of this favourite topic. It seems to have a fatal fascination in it;—doubtless because to people who think at all it can never offer any real repose. One divine after another of powerful intellect approaches it, with the same invariable result; that either his Logic or his Ethics go to pieces at once. When Butler resorted to the plea that, notwithstanding the ill-look of the doctrine, there were uglier things to be found in the real world; when Jonathan Edwards, with his inexorable reasoning, had to define Moral relations in a way to secure their absence from his path; when Magee could only browbeat his opponents, and, as Mr. Garden observes, evade the knot of the whole question; when a writer who could so well expound the principles of reasoning as Dr. Thomson in his *Outlines of the Laws of Thought*, could so ill exemplify them in his Bampton Lectures on the Atonement;—we may be excused perhaps for suggesting that the solution is still missing; not for want of genius to work it out, but because the problem is imaginary, and the answer impossible. The doctrine arose out of a picture or programme of the universe and human life which, though still hung up on many a church-wall, has no real truth for the modern understanding, no daily presence to the inward eye. The human sense of sin and consciousness of moral infirmity have assumed, if a less passionate, perhaps a deeper and a truer form; in which a more discriminating measure is taken of guilt, and its purely personal nature is felt to remove it from possibilities of exchange. Theories of salvation are always cor-

relative with theories of perdition: and since the vision of eternal ruin, as the rule for the human race, has passed from among credible realities and descended to the rank of ecclesiastical scene-painting, the scheme for exceptional rescue, constructed by divines out of misinterpreted Scripture, is felt to be artificial too. So long as men believed themselves helplessly sold and made over to some one who meant to torture them, —whether to the Devil, as the ancient Church supposed, or to a judicial God unable to remit, as modern theology pretends,—so long as, in their view, some one's rights over them had to be bought off ere they could be set free for true obedience and hope, the language which described "Salvation," "Redemption," "Satisfaction," "Propitiation," as an objective arrangement or supernatural "expedient" devised on their behalf, had an exact and congenial meaning. But now the disciple is told, with infinitely deeper truth, that the terrible claimant from whom he needs deliverance is *himself*: and to this inner thralldom, the old programme of an outer rescue negotiated for him has no proper application. All that can be said in harmony with it is this;—that he cannot, by any act of volition, be his own deliverer; that, to take him out of himself, he needs a real object, better than himself, as well as an inner power higher than his will; and that, if ever he is to know the law of self-surrender, as the sole reconciliation of the human spirit with the Divine, it can only be by the appeal of a realised self-sacrifice, in which life becomes the simple organ giving the Will of God a conscious way. As in the case of the "Incarnation," so in this of the "Atonement," the truth which remains on hand is not special to the person of Christ, but human and universal, revealed to us through its perfect embodiment in him. For our humanity there is no way of reconciliation and Divine peace, but the path of self-sacrifice: the glory of its sorrows and the opening lights at its end, we see in him who entered it for us: and all in every age who have faith to follow him refresh the emblem of the cross with new meanings, and "fill up what remains of the sufferings of Christ."

We have followed our Tractarians chiefly in their discussion of the interior of Christian doctrine; because it is here alone that their characteristics, as a distinct class of theologians, come into view. The grand prior question, however,—of the possibility and fact of supernatural revelation at all,—is treated in two of the *Tracts*; with especial reference to the credibility of Miracles, by Mr. Davies; and to the atheistic conception of Natural Laws, by Mr. Ludlow. The main positions taken up by the former appear to us wisely chosen and well defended: that to minds unprepared by faith in a living God,

and sympathy with the spiritual elements of the religion of Christ, miracles must remain now, what Scripture shows them to have been at first, unconvincing prodigies: that when the order of persuasion is reversed, and they issue from one already recognised, on higher grounds, as Founder of a "Kingdom of Heaven," they cease to encounter any formidable resistance, but are left in their place as outer "signs" of that kingdom: that instead, therefore, of setting them as the base, they should rather come in as the crown of faith, not so much supporting, as showing conspicuously and far, the form and structure of the Divine government to which they belong. The theologian who disputes this principle, and insists on the logical cogency of the miracles as proofs, ought to explain how it is that they do not practically exercise this force,—that they are the difficulty rather than the resource of the "Christian advocate" in dealing with doubt,—and that they have come to be no longer a real power for aggression, but the chief object of defence, even with writers on "the Evidences." Mr. Davies, in common with two or three of his coadjutors, attributes the alienation of scientific men from the idea of miracle to a false definition of it as a violation or suspension of law; and claims back their allegiance on the plea that, instead of violating, it fulfils law, and reveals an order higher than that which it seems to break. He regards the "mighty works" of Christ as no less *natural* to his place in the scale of being, and no more wonderful except to observers at a lower point, than the brilliant marvels which a Faraday might display before an assembly of astonished savages. And were it even to prove within the resources of future science to repeat at will the very acts recorded in the gospels, their Divine character and function would in no way be affected. This answer seems to us, we must confess, to miss the point of the objector's scruple: and, in order to render the miracles credible, to deprive them of all religious value. If they are merely the exercise of a *higher art*, the anticipation of a *skill* to be learned hereafter by those who marvel at it now, they manifest nothing but superior knowledge and such command of the methods of Nature as might be attainable in a godless world. The proper treatment of them in that case would be a close scrutiny of the scientific conditions of their performance, till the rules were detected by which they gained their end: and, the moment this was done, their characteristic impression would be lost, and rationalism would have established its case. In proportion as the Agent himself was of truthful and earnest mind,—a Faraday, or such as a Faraday would revere,—he would be eager for this result, eager to explain and impart the method of his procedure, and take the seeming mystery and magic away.

He would never use his power as an instrument of persuasion and authority in matters moral and spiritual with which it had no inner connexion. In short, a *miracle by scientific process* is self-condemned; for the whole religious meaning of miracle consists in this,—that it is an immediate creation of Will, as distinguished from the mediate elaborations of method: the latter being the beaten track of docile intelligence adapting itself to the given usages of nature; the former the exercise of a personal causality transcending those usages, such as the Author of them could alone impart. Take away this meaning; and how can it any longer be said, that miracles startle and refresh the earth with the recovered sense of living Divine Power? That they do this is due to their acceptance as direct products of lordly and originating Will, as opposed to the procured results of obedient and sequacious intelligence.

Whether the phenomena thus issued are properly described as exceptions to "natural law," or examples of it, must depend on the range of definition given to the word "Natural," and separating it from "Supernatural." The word is not of stationary and absolute significance, but always has tacit reference to some "Nature," adopted for the moment as a standard: and means *agreeable to the nature*,—it may be of GOD, or of the perceptible UNIVERSE, or of MAN. With the last of these the present question has no concern. To God, as all-comprehending, the miraculous and the ordinary are no doubt "natural" alike, determined into existence conformably with the supreme order of his mind, and the spontaneous rules of a Will which excludes confusion and caprice. In reference, then, to this, the ultimate home of reality, it is perfectly true that miracles (assuming their occurrence) must be instances, and not violations, of "natural law." Nobody, we suppose, ever imagined the contrary, or sanctioned the idea that God issued them on no rule or principle at all. It is not usual, except in pantheistic speculation, to carry the word "Nature" up to that height: and not till we limit it to the physical Universe, can we reasonably ask what is, and what is not, in conformity with "Natural Law,"—i. e. with the method constituted for the given class of cases. There is no way of solving such a question except by comparing the phenomenon with the ascertained rule for its usual production, and seeing how far it is *en règle*. By this test, a miracle is surely irreducible to natural law. Its very essence is, to be exceptional to the event's own proper law: and whoever affirms it to fall under another, which, however, he cannot find and name, does but whisper its supernatural character away by a gratuitous surmise. He may still, it is true, regard it as a *Divine act*; because he may look

on all that happens, in the orderly vicissitude of things, as the immediate product of God's living Will, and may regard the "laws" of the world as only the rules, and its alleged "forces" as only the types, of his single Power. But, in thus abolishing the distinction between pretended Secondary Causes and the one Primary, he leaves unremoved the difference between the usual and the exceptional mode of Divine activity. The former is what we mean by natural law; the latter, by miracle. In the one, God proceeds in fidelity to a method laid down as a basis for human expectations: in the other, we conceive him to act, *pro re natâ*, out of those moral affections which are the real background of all the order of the world, but which the custom of things is apt to hide from our dull eye. This *free* agency, straight out of the ultimate springs of the Spirit, unhindered by pledged usage, seems to us to give the true conception of the "Supernatural." *Nature* is the sphere and system of God's self-prescribed methods of reliable evolution of phenomena: but above and beyond nature He is *Spirit*; including nature indeed as part of its expression; but, instead of being all committed to nature, transcending it on every side, and opening a life of communion with the spirits that can reflect himself. All is thus his agency: Nature, his fixed Will; Spirit, his free Will. To take miracle from the latter, and hand it over to the former, is to strip it of its special interest as an expression of character, while setting up for it an inferior claim which cannot possibly be substantiated. We know the law to which the act of walking on the sea would present an indisputable exception. We know of none which it would exemplify; and indulge an unauthorised fancy in supposing it.

The anxiety, then, to draw past miracle into the domain of future science appears to us mistaken. And after all, it is beyond the reach of any philosophical revision of theory to touch the real difficulties of this question. Its decision is practically reserved, not for the metaphysician, but for the historical critic; and must arise, not sweepingly by the adjustment of an idea, but in detail, by patient estimate of narratives, taken one by one. "Signs and wonders," however related to nature and to God, are not self-evidencing things;—but reported facts, whose intrinsic credibility, even at the strongest, is liable to be forfeited by testimonial defects. It is not when we sit at a vague distance, but when we go into the interior detail of Scripture, that the real elements of this inquiry present themselves. Who are our informants? What were their sources of knowledge? Do they agree? Are they free from distorting media of observation? Are they all of equal value? or must discrimination be exercised upon their mixed material?—such are the ques-

tions on which, for the practical English mind, this controversy hinges. On these Mr. Davies does not enter: but it is a good service to rid the field of those prejudgments against miracle which, too often, intercept the just impression of the sacred writings.

Mr. Ludlow writes in Dialogue; first, a short vindication of earnest Doubt; and then two discussions, forming the seventh (and latest) Tract, on Laws of Nature, and on Positive Philosophy. All these are striking and noble productions, marked by the same manliness and moral *verve* which give character to the *Religio Laici*, with stronger support from an acute and reflective intellect. It is the inherent disadvantage of polemic dialogue written by one side, that it can hardly do justice to both: and the Comtian interlocutor of the seventh Tract suffers himself to be beaten on such easy terms, that Messrs. Mill and Buckle, we fancy, would hardly accept the verdict, but would move for a new trial. As a set-off, however, there are concessions very needlessly, as we think, made to Comte, especially to that singular generalisation from his personal psychology, the three-fold law; which has always appeared to us to have every refutation which history can give to it, and no evidence beyond its own compactness. Every thing "three-fold" seems to have a charm and mystery ready for Mr. Ludlow, as a new outcome of the Trinity: he discovers it in Comte's law; in the Pauline "spirit, soul, and body;" in the relations of "force, law, and order" in the Kosmos; and of "power, wisdom, and goodness" in morals. It is the instinct of an imaginative mind to trace forests of wonder in the frost-work of abstractions thrown upon its window: and it were idle to discuss what a glance may create and a breath dissolve. Far deeper things than these are brought out by our author's dialectic. He thoroughly understands the strong position held by wise defenders of old faiths in relation to the new philosophy; viz. that they adopt all its affirmations, and question only its denials. He is prepared to go along with it through the whole length of its field,—observation, induction, grouping and hierarchy of laws; to allow unreservedly its right of guidance to the furthest verge of perceptible phenomena; to welcome every glimpse it may open into fresh reaches of time and space, or unsuspected tissues of relation. Only when it begins to build a blind barrier on the confines of its own province, and set up its notice that nothing lies beyond but the limbo of vanity, does he limit his allegiance, and, while bowing to its Positive science, dispute its Positive omniscience. The whole process of knowledge,—the logic of method,—involves in it certain preconceptions of Reason and postulates of Faith; without which Induction could never mount

from Fact to Law ; in virtue of which the idea of Force steals in unseen among the "uniformities ;" and, in defiance of prohibition, the quest of causes, not Efficient only, but Final too, insinuates itself into researches which least intend it. The several threads of this clue, furnished by the very constitution of the human intellect, our author gathers up and traces to their ultimate indication of a Supreme and Living Will. He draws attention to some of those pathetic traces, which can have escaped no careful reader of the *Philosophie Positive*, of an unconscious faith in Comte, deeper than his conscious doctrine. From the exposition of a system which denies purpose in nature, and any thing superior to man, it is strange to hear that our higher capacities are "*the ends for which the organic life exists*,"—that there is "*a need of eternity inherent in our nature*,"—that there will always "*appear above us a type of real perfection*" below which we must still remain, though it invites our persevering efforts to continued approximation ;" but such involuntary testimonies are sure to push themselves through some crevices of even the compactest logical denial ; and betray the indestructible seed of spiritual truth where there seems neither soil nor dew to let it grow. Of the attempt, by creating a diversion in favour of outward "experience," to stifle such germs of higher faith, Mr. Ludlow indignantly asks—

"Do you think you can silence these obstinate questionings of man's spirit by that parrot-cry of 'facts!' 'confine yourself to facts' ?—'Confine myself to facts ?' the spirit answers ; 'why, I struggle to do so, but they will not let me ; they drive me away from them to where they seem facts no longer, but mere shadows and semblances of mightier realities, of a world unseen, of a kingdom which cannot be moved. Facts ! But your participle implies a verb, *quis fecit* ? Who made these facts which you told me to study, and wherefore were they made ? You bid me observe succession ; but where is the first, and where the last ? You bid me dwell on similitude, but where is the pattern from whence it flows, the standard whereby it is to be measured ? You speak of order and harmony : I crave for them ; I have glimpses of them every now and then, never lasting, never satisfying ; merely as flashes from a hidden realm of light. But as often that order and harmony seem to have entirely vanished amid disorder and confusion inextricable, or else they are themselves stern, pitiless, crushing. I cannot believe in them when I miss their presence ; I cannot cherish them when I feel them grating on me and overwhelming me, unless I believe in a quenchless source from which they spring, in an unseen sphere wherein they dwell, in an abiding Power which uses them with unfailing wisdom, for purposes of all-embracing love. Give me that faith, and I shall be able, with the great Florentine, to see written on the very gates of everlasting woe the words of fire—

"Fecemi la Divina Potestate,
La somma Sapienza e 'l Primo Amore."

Deny me that faith, and if I am to forego all looking before and after; if I am to shut myself up with the everlasting riddle of this universe, having no other occupation than to observe the relations between "my first," "my second," "my third," "my whole," carefully abstaining from the word itself, I tell you that two pennyworth of gin will give me an easier and pleasanter *anæsthæsia* than all your Positive Philosophy.' (No. VII. p. 43.)

We have no fear of any extensive religious insensibility from the influence of the Positive Philosophy. There is a thirst in human nature which is not reached by the flat and bitter waters of such a Lethe; and which will take men, when its first delusive sleep is over, to purer and perennial fountains. We have a much more fatal indifference to apprehend from the spreading habit of insincere profession and uneasy acquiescence than from any exceptional boldness of honest disbelief. The crisis which is calling forth these *Tracts* is a most serious one; and, with the partial exception of their authors, no one is prepared to meet it with any appreciation of its real significance. The publication and immense diffusion of the *Essays and Reviews* means this,—that the intellectual part of English Society is in revolt against the received form of Christianity, and snatching at the hope of something truer and deeper. The fact, indeed, has long ceased to be a secret. The whole tone of the current literature,—the artificial separation of religious books into a class by themselves,—the decent reticence or ill-concealed contempt of public writers and political men,—the increasing refusal of an ecclesiastical career by Academic students of highest promise,—the eager welcome of such volumes as Frederick Robertson's by educated people who will read no other theology,—are unmistakable symptoms of alienation from the recognised standards of belief. To the ripest mind and character of this age, the creeds speak a foreign language and reach no home within. The studious and learned have come to know that the Scriptures, though the richest sources of spiritual light, cannot be sustained in the oracular position which has been assigned to them. The whole theory of life,—silently felt rather than deliberately thought,—has irrevocably changed; consecrating this world, disenchanting the other of a thousand terrors; softening every curse, deepening every trust; blending the colours of nature and of grace; and finding the mysteries of eternity already present at every hour of time. No one, we are persuaded, can associate habitually with those classes whose mental and moral habitudes are the surest augury of our social future, without a profound conviction that the dogmatic Protestantism

of the 16th century is fast dying out of the life of the 19th. And the ominous peculiarity is this,—that it is apparently dying a natural death, without violence, without conspiracy, without ill-will,—nay, amid the embraces and the tears of those from whose hearts it is torn, and whose childhood it nurtured. To charge this class—which grows in the atmosphere of letters, science, and moral refinement—with any wilful alienation,—with the offences of “impiety” and “infidelity” so ready on the ecclesiastic tongue,—is a futile injury. Amid the decay of formulated doctrine among them, a true reverence, we believe, pre-vaillingly remains for the great moral and spiritual characteristics of the Christian faith, and an open susceptibility to any Divine light that goes home to the veracities of thought and conscience. Is this state of things to have no meaning and give no warning? Are those who, like the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, recognise it and try to disengage the imperishable spirit from the transitory form of faith, to be refuted by Canon Law, and removed from a Church which has no room for living thought? Then it will be understood that the Church of the Nation excommunicates the Intellect of the Nation, and is content to rest on the Squirarchy, the Farmers, and a portion of the Tradesmen, relying on its social stability and not on its spiritual power. Such a severance we cannot but regard as degrading while it lasts and fatal in its end. The Religion which cannot encompass and vivify the whole of life, glorifying its thought, refining its art, sweetening its poetry, as well as ordering its affections and ennobling its action, is no longer the true expression of Him without whom nothing is; and in losing its transcendancy, parts with its essence and abdicates its power.

ART. IX.—IS COTTON KING?

Neill Brothers and Co.'s Circular. Manchester, August 21, 1861.

THE supply of cotton, on which so important a branch of our industry depends, is jeopardised to a greater or less degree by the deplorable civil war which now desolates America. So much alarm is felt at the prospect of a cotton-famine, and so many suggestions have been made for averting or mitigating the imminent calamity, that it is desirable to ascertain how far the fears entertained are excessive, and how far the remedies proposed are applicable and effective. There can be no doubt that the matter is a very serious one, not only for cotton-spinners and importers, but for the hundreds of thousands, not to say millions, of working men and women whose daily bread is threatened by the crisis; and not only for them, but for the

Government, on which devolves the difficult task of maintaining peace and order in periods of severe distress ; and not only for the Government, but for every class and denomination of Englishmen, who cannot fail to suffer when the masses are unemployed, and who will be called upon both to sympathise in their privations, and to sacrifice much for their relief. We must therefore devote a few pages to a brief statement of the real facts of the case ; in which, without making light of what is an unquestionable danger, we shall endeavour to reduce the nebulous terror to definite outlines, and to its true dimensions. We shall speak in round numbers and in general terms, avoiding all elaborate figures and all tedious and technical details.

In the infancy of the cotton-trade, we drew our raw material chiefly from the West Indies and Asia. During the last fifty years, however, by far the largest portion, and an increasing portion, of our supply has come from the United States. Brazil sends us some ; Egypt sends us some ; India sends us a great deal ; but America usually furnishes 75 per cent of our aggregate consumption. We are now threatened with the entire withholding of this large proportion. It is grown exclusively in the seceding States, whose ports are now blockaded ; and the Federalists declare that not a bale shall be exported, if their utmost vigilance can prevent its shipment. Under these circumstances, we have two inquiries to make :—*first*, What shall we do if we really receive no cotton from America ? and, *secondly*, What probability is there that we really shall receive none ? Let us take the first question to begin with, and face the worst that can befall us.

The quantity we require to enable all our mills to work full time is about two millions and a quarter of bales. As soon as it becomes apparent or probable that America will send us little or none (and the *possibility* at least of such a catastrophe has now made its way to most minds), all other countries may be expected to strain their utmost powers to send us as much as they can gather. The advance of price and the consequent action of enterprising merchants will probably insure this. How much, then, can the other cotton-growing countries of the world export ? Certainly, at least as much as they ever have done in *their* most productive and in *our* most necessitous years. Now the most they have ever done for us is this :

Egypt sent	.	.	1852	.	.	189,000 bales.
Brazil „	.	.	1857	.	.	168,000 „
West Indies, &c. sent	„	.	„	.	.	11,000 „
India sent	.	.	„	.	.	680,000 „
						<hr/>
						1,048,000

There is no chance of our being able to draw much more from the first three quarters than we did in the years quoted above, when a partial failure in the American crop stimulated them to their best exertions. But we know that India can, on an emergency, send us much more than she did then—much more than she has ever done yet. She is known to grow an enormous quantity every year; part of which is sent to China, part to Europe; but far the largest portion is consumed by the native manufacturers. The entire amount *produced* is variously estimated by the most qualified authorities at from two millions to seven millions of bales. Nothing definite, however, is actually known. But we may fairly assume that the average Indian is at least equal to the average American crop, which now reaches from four to five millions of bales a year. Thus much is *grown*: how much of it can we *get*?

The most careful inquiry into the question does not enable us to do more than *guess*. It is purely a question of price and roads. If the price rises high enough, there is no doubt the natives will send us all they can,—all, that is, that can be transported to the port of shipment, and carried thence to Liverpool, on such terms as to leave a handsome profit when it reaches England. We shall, of course, drain all the districts within practicable distance from the coast.* It is confidently believed by the best-informed merchants that, if prices rise as fast and as far as seems probable, India will this year send us at least a million of bales. And we should indorse this calculation with every feeling of security, were it not precisely the amount promised with confidence by Sir Charles Wood, whose figures are always wrong, and whose confidence is never justified by the result. This quantity, added to about 400,000 bales from other miscellaneous quarters, would insure a total supply of 1,400,000 bales, to meet a calculated requirement of 2,250,000 bales, as above mentioned.

There are, however, certain considerations which may materially modify this calculation, and diminish the figures

* The practical difficulty which stands in the way of our obtaining any very large and very sudden increase of supply from India lies in the fact that there exist in the cotton-districts but scanty means of water-conveyance, and that land-carriage, whether by bullocks or by railways, is enormously expensive, especially for so bulky an article as cotton. The present rate by railway in India is about $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per ton per mile, and by river nearly $3d.$ The cost of water-carriage in America (and little else is employed) rarely exceeds $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per ton per mile. The charge on a bale of cotton brought from 500 miles in the interior would therefore be only about 5s. in the United States, while it would vary from 15s. to 30s. in India. Any suddenly augmented supply which we expect from India must in consequence be obtained by thoroughly draining the districts near the coast, and by diverting the usual exports to China, rather than by obtaining any considerable quantities from the remoter fields of the interior. And, accordingly, we find that it was in this way the unusual amount exported in 1857 was procured.

we have named, and which, though conjectural only, must not be overlooked. We are not the sole manufacturing countries of the Old World. France, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy consume large quantities of cotton. Out of 5,000,000 bales used in 1860, it is estimated that Great Britain took 2,500,000, the United States 800,000, and the several countries of Europe 1,700,000. This country is the great emporium where most of the cotton grown is sent, either for consumption or distribution. In ordinary years we reexport to the Continent considerable quantities of all sorts. We have assumed in the above calculation that, as Great Britain is certainly the best market in the world, and as the importance and imperative necessities of our manufacturing industry are greater than those of any other country, we should be able (under such exceptional circumstances as we are discussing and expecting) to retain for our own use the whole, or nearly the whole, of the cotton we import. Probably, if matters were left to take their natural course, this would be the case, with certain inconsiderable exceptions. At the same time we must bear in mind that countries whose native manufactures are protected by very high duties, or by actual prohibitive tariffs, may be able so to raise the prices of the manufactured article, as to be able to give very high rates for the raw material. People must have a certain amount of cotton-goods, whatever the cost be; and if their government will not let them procure it from abroad, they must employ their own manufacturers to produce it, and must pay them such a remunerative price as will enable them to purchase the raw cotton. We have very lately had a startling reminder of this truth in the circumstance that Boston manufacturers and New-York merchants have actually been purchasing in Liverpool the cotton which they cannot do without, but can no longer procure from New Orleans and Mobile. The quantities are small, no doubt; but the fact is significant enough.

Still, if there were no interference with the operation of natural causes, we should probably be able so far to outbid other countries as to keep most of the arriving cotton for our own consumption. But can we feel confident that there will be no such interference? Scarcely. We have two neighbours and rivals, whose proceedings are sometimes very anomalous, and who are governed by different principles of commercial policy from those adopted by ourselves. It is possible that the United States may resolve upon entirely excluding British cotton-goods by a tariff even more decidedly prohibitive than the present one, and thus virtually giving such a bounty to the New-England manufacturers as shall enable them to give *arti-*

ficial prices for the raw material in the Liverpool market. In this case, unless we so far depart from our established policy as to lay a corresponding export-duty upon cotton, we may find a considerable portion of the supply on which we had reckoned gradually drained away. Again, Louis Napoleon is notorious for his irregular and incalculable commercial operations. He has before now purchased silver in this country at a price which *financially* could not pay; and the proceeding sorely perplexed the most experienced moneyed men. He is known to dread above every thing that discontent among the masses which invariably accompanies want of work and want of wages, and which in France is so apt to take the form of political disturbance. Suppose he were to resolve that he will not run the risk of having the manufacturing operatives of Rouen and the Alsace thrown out of employment, and that he will secure a supply of cotton to France whatever it may cost. He might then either offer a bounty of a penny or twopence a pound on every bale imported; or he might employ agents at Liverpool, at Alexandria, and at Bombay to purchase cotton on behalf of the Government, which he would afterwards retail to his subjects below cost-price. He is quite capable of either enterprise, and he will adopt which ever shall seem the cheaper and more promising. It is quite upon the cards that he may fancy that five millions of (borrowed) money could not be more profitably employed. And, considering what Frenchmen are, and in what relation he stands towards them, it is by no means clear that his fancy would be wrong.

The various suggestions so freely offered by zealous amateurs as to the numberless countries from which cotton could be obtained are well meant and intelligent enough, but are quite irrelevant to the present crisis. There is no doubt that cotton may be grown almost any where in the warmer portions of the temperate, and in many of the tropical, regions of the globe. It can be produced in abundance, so far as soil and climate are concerned, in Haiti, in Jamaica, on the shores of the Mediterranean, in Australia, and on the coast of Africa, as well as in America and Hindostan. Nay more,—it is already cultivated to some extent in all these countries in moderate quantities and of fair quality. If America were to be sunk in the sea, or if any circumstances made it clear or probable that we should never receive another bale from that quarter, English enterprise and English demand would in three or four years secure us an adequate supply from some part or other of the world. But this would be a work of time, of arrangement, of vast capital laid out with a view to future returns. We have to meet an immediate, not a prospective, deficiency. Our necessities are

imminent, but they are *temporary*. Long before the new sources of supply that have been suggested became productive, the old source will be again available, and will be pouring in abundant quantities at prices (probably) with which no more recently and artificially-established cultivation can compete. We must bear this point carefully and constantly in mind. What we have to do to meet the actual emergency is, not to set about growing cotton elsewhere, but to procure as large a supply as possible from quarters *where it is already grown*. We shall lack cotton in 1862, and most likely *only* then; and it is idle to tell us whence and how we may procure it by 1864 and 1865.

We need not complicate our inquiry by dwelling on the various *qualities* of the cotton we require, because the difficulties arising thence may and must be got over. The character of American cotton is peculiar, and is only paralleled by that of native African growth. It is as a rule not so long in fibre as the Egyptian or the Brazilian; but it is softer, silkier, whiter, and more *kindly* to work. On the other hand, the East-Indian cotton (*Surat*, as it is usually termed) is shorter, drier, dirtier, and harsher than the American, but of a richer and creamier colour. The American cotton is available for *all* purposes; the Egyptian and Brazilian is available only for the finer yarns, and for the *warp*, as it is technically called,—*i. e.* the longitudinal threads of the woven cloth; while the *Surat* is available only, or chiefly, for the coarser yarns, and for the *weft*, or transverse threads of the fabric. The American article, therefore, can, on an emergency, be dispensed with, and its place supplied, though inconveniently and imperfectly, by the other qualities. Difficulty exists, no doubt; but with a little management, and a slight modification of the machinery employed, it can and will be got over. We may, therefore, dismiss this branch of the subject from our minds, and recur to the question of the *quantity* of our supply.

That quantity, we have seen, may fairly be calculated—*apart from forcible interference with the regular operation of commercial influences*—at 1,400,000 bales, to meet an estimated requirement of 2,300,000. The deficiency appears a large one. But it will be mitigated by a process familiar to all conversant with the trade. Most mills have a potential range of production of from thirty to fifty per cent; that is to say, according to the finer or coarser character of the yarn or the fabric they are making, they will consume sometimes 150 bales a week, and sometimes only 100. Now the obvious and natural effect of a high price of the raw material is to drive every manufacturer upon the finest sort of fabric which his machinery is readily capable of producing and which he is able to dispose

of,—by way of using as little of the raw material as possible. Thus a manufacturer who, when “Middling Orleans” is to be had at 6*d.* per lb., spins No. 24*s.*, and weaves “domestics,” will, when the same cotton costs 9*d.* per lb., spin No. 40*s.*, and weave shirtings. By this means he keeps his machinery at work and his people employed, but uses up much less cotton than before. The variation in the demand caused by the same high price of the raw material favours, and, indeed, suggests, this operation. In some articles the cotton forms two-thirds of the entire value; in others, not above one-third, or even much less. It is obvious that the selling-price of the former will be much more enhanced by a rise in the cost of the raw material than that of the latter. The demand for the former, therefore, will be much more checked than that of the latter, and the *preferential* production of the latter will be stimulated. Thus, if 2,300,000 bales would (as we have seen) be necessary to keep all mills working full time on their *ordinary class of fabrics*, probably not more than 1,800,000 or 1,900,000 will be needed when they have all turned to as fine articles as they can produce and sell.

If the figures we have given are approximatively true (and though liable, as we have said, to be upset by artificial interference, and certainly not gloomy, we do not think they can be regarded as unduly sanguine), then we shall want, say, 1,850,000 bales, and shall obtain 1,400,000. That is, we shall have enough to enable our mills to work three-quarters time, or more than four days a week. That is, our operatives, who now earn, say, 12*s.* a week on an average, or about 24*s.* or 30*s.* per family (for several in a family, we must remember, are often employed), will have to be content with 8*s.* or 9*s.* each, or 16*s.* to 25*s.* per household. This will press heavily upon them, no doubt, and will affect the Excise and Customs Revenue; but it is not ruin. It is privation, but it is a long way off misery or destitution.

This calculation, however, it must be observed, proceeds upon two assumptions: first, that short time is worked throughout the whole year (or other period) during which the cotton scarcity lasts; and secondly, that the supply is fairly apportioned among all the manufacturers of the country. *Neither assumption is correct.* For a considerable time after the scarcity declared itself, or at least became a decided prospect,—indeed nearly to the present time,—most mills have worked as long hours as usual. And while some manufacturers are well stocked with cotton, and prefer to keep all their machinery employed, and have capital enough to do so even at a heavy loss, other and poorer men are ill-supplied, and will probably ere long be reduced to the necessity of stopping altogether. Although,

therefore, the aggregate amount of earnings which we have estimated will really be distributed among the operative classes, it will be distributed unequally: practically, many will have full employment and full pay; many will have only half work; and considerable numbers, we fear, will be thrown out of employment altogether.

There is yet one other element of uncertainty in reference to the supply on which we have calculated,—an element so serious that it would be dangerous to keep it out of view. We have shown that if prices rise *as fast and as high* as the withdrawal or certain and prolonged withholding of the American crop would warrant and insure,—those prices will bring from miscellaneous quarters a supply of 1,400,000 bales. *But will prices be thus affected?* What appearance of such advance have they hitherto shown? The answer, it must be confessed, is somewhat disquieting. Prices have not advanced in any thing approaching the degree they ought to have done in the expectation that 75 per cent of our ordinary cotton-import would not come forward. “Middling Orleans,” which stood at 7*d.* in November and December last, has only reached 9½*d.* now. Surat, which was 4½*d.* in November, was quoted at 6*d.* in the middle of September. It is obvious, then, that merchants and manufacturers do not entertain the expectation in question. They do not believe that the entire American crop will be withheld. They cling to the hope that somehow, and within some reasonable time, the whole or a considerable portion of that crop will be available. If the crop had been *destroyed*, the price would have risen 100 or 150 per cent at once, and India, Egypt, and Brazil would have poured in every bale they could scrape together. But as it is merely *withheld*, and may be liberated and come forward any day, the price has only *crept up* in the course of ten months about 30 per cent, and the needed stimulus to foreign countries has been only partially and languidly applied. The truth is, that the future of cotton is so thoroughly and hopelessly *incalculable*,—its sale or purchase is so much a mere *gambling* transaction,—that prudent men, especially prudent men who remember the frightful fluctuations of 1825, dare not operate with any boldness. Cotton stands at 9*d.*, not because it would not run up to 1*s.* if we were certain that the war and the blockade would continue for a year, but because it would fall to 6*d.* to-morrow if tidings came of an armistice and an accommodation. Herein lies our most serious danger. The scarcity is still considered so problematic, that the price which would avert or remedy that scarcity cannot be attained.

Our speculations thus far have proceeded on the assumption that we shall not receive any portion of the American crop during the coming year ; which is the menaced calamity that is held over our heads. Both parties on the other side the water profess to be equally determined on this head. The United States say that no cotton shall leave the ports. The Confederate States say that none shall even leave the plantations. We have now, therefore, to examine the *second* question which we specified at the commencement of this article, and to inquire how far the above assumption is well founded and likely to be realised. This inquiry at once obviously divides itself into two branches,—“Will the blockade be an effective one?” and, “Will the war last?” These are really the only two points for consideration ; for the notion that the planting States will voluntarily and persistently withhold their cotton, whatever they may now threaten or pretend, we regard as simply absurd. At present they are very angry, very magniloquent, and very foolish. No doubt they abhor the idea of any of their produce going to employ Northern spinners, and are resolved not to help and comfort their enemies in this way if they can help. No doubt a shallow, unfounded conception has taken possession of their minds that “Cotton is King ;” that by starving New-England manufacturers they will bring the North to reason ; that Great Britain and France are entirely dependent on the American supply for the employment of their capital, the profits of their trade, and the subsistence and tranquillity of their industrial populations ; and that their wants and their fears will soon force both Governments to interfere and compel the Federal Republic to abandon the blockade. No doubt, also, they are well aware that the threat they have sent forth to the world, of not allowing a single bale of cotton or tobacco to leave the plantations, is one which, while it *sounds* very terrible, can at present be carried out without the slightest inconvenience to themselves, as well as without the slightest practical effect of any sort ; inasmuch as there is not now, and will not be for some time to come, any cotton (nor much tobacco) to go forward,—the old crop having been already exported, and the new one not being yet gathered. Moreover, not only are there no cargoes to be shipped, but there are no vessels in harbour to receive them even if there were. But as soon as the leaders of the Southern Confederacy have had leisure and calmness to inquire and to reflect, they will become aware, first, that England and France, having recognised the indisputable belligerent rights of the North, have far too strong a sense of the requirements of international law, decency, and usage to dream of such an act of direct and unwarrantable hostility against the

United States as a forcible violation of the blockade; and secondly, that cotton and tobacco are themselves neither food, clothing, nor warlike stores, though they may be exchangeable for such; and that a *poor* Confederacy, in want of many things, and dependent on foreigners for most things, cannot out of mere spite and bravado keep at home 50,000,000% of produce without crippling their own resources and ruining their own cause. This queer delusion, then,—if indeed it be a delusion at all, and not a mere blustering endeavour to throw dust into European eyes,—will soon pass, and the South will be just as anxious to sell their cotton as Europe is to buy it. We recur, therefore, to the practical question: “Can the blockade be made thoroughly effective and complete, so as to prevent any cotton from being exported from the Southern States?”

That the Federal Government will use the greatest exertions to seal up the harbours of the planting States as hermetically as possible, there can be no doubt. It is quite their most powerful and secure weapon in the war they have undertaken. Hitherto the work has been most languidly and inefficiently done; but many signs show that a new energy has been recently infused into their movements; and we know that the blockading force has been largely increased. But in the first place, the military navy of the North is not large, nor is it particularly well officered, since most of the commanders were of Southern extraction, and have surrendered their Federal commissions, and gone to serve their native States. At the same time the coast to be watched is of enormous extent, ranging from Chesapeake Bay to Matamoros, and measuring 2500 miles. The harbours habitually used for the export of cotton are, it is true, few, and the entire number of regularly established ports does not exceed thirty; but, what is much more important, the whole seaboard abounds in creeks, inlets, sheltered and concealed inner waters, wherein small vessels of light draught might be easily laden, and whence they could issue by night or in fogs, and evade the vigilance of the blockading squadron. It is equally important to notice, that nearly every part of the coast is connected with the interior by water-communication of some sort. Cotton is a bulky article, no doubt, and small craft could only carry moderate quantities; but these craft could run to Havana or Matanzas in a few days,—sometimes, and from some quarters, in twenty-four hours,—and, once there, could tranship their cargoes into larger ships fitted for Atlantic navigation. The coast to be guarded, moreover, is peculiarly subject at certain seasons to fogs and squalls, during which the blockading squadron is liable to be blown off shore, or compelled to put to sea for safety; and numbers of merchant-ves-

sels would always be waiting to take advantage of these golden opportunities. It would seem probable, therefore, that the number of cargoes that would escape unseen, or that even, if chased, would evade capture, must in the end be considerable.

Then it is to be considered that the stricter the blockade the stronger are the pecuniary motives to break or run it, the greater the risks that merchants are willing to encounter, and the more numerous the captures they are able to bear. The same interruption to the regular course of trade—the same effective blockade—which raises the price of cotton at Liverpool, where it is thirsted for, lowers the price at New Orleans, where it is a drug. In ordinary times, perhaps, the article is worth 4*d.* a pound in America and 6*d.* a pound in England, and leaves a good profit at those rates. The blockade may make the same article worth 1*s.* in England, and only 2*d.* in America. In that case it is obvious that the profits upon a successful venture would be so enormous as to compensate for the loss upon two unsuccessful ones, as in the case of the Cuban slave-trade. The moment the relative prices on the two sides of the Atlantic reach any thing like the figures we have named, we may be perfectly sure that every bale of cotton that can will endeavour to run the blockade, and will sometimes, perhaps often, succeed in doing so. And, whether it succeeds or not, the result, as far as the supply of our markets is concerned, will be the same. Whether the cargo gets away uncaptured, or is seized by the United States cruisers, does not signify a straw to us. It is equally available for manufacture. In the one case we purchase it from the exporter, in the other case from the captor; that is all. It either comes to Liverpool, or it prevents an equal quantity going from Liverpool to Boston. If, therefore, prices give a sufficient inducement for English ships to endeavour to run into, and run out of, the blockaded harbours, cotton in certain quantities will reach us through some channel or other.

There is yet another consideration to be noted. The Federal squadron will have no motive for preventing the egress of vessels from the ports they are watching. They want prize-money, and their fellow-citizens want cotton. If they hermetically seal the ports, they deprive themselves of both. They injure their enemies, but they do not benefit themselves. If, on the other hand, they connive at the vessels coming out, and capture them when they appear, they effect all three objects: they spoil and harm their antagonists more thoroughly than by merely shutting up their produce; they supply the Northern manufactures with the raw material they want; and they realise rich pickings for themselves. Can we doubt which course

shrewd and hungry Yankees will pursue? We are greatly mistaken if the blockading squadron do not ere long exchange the tedious occupation of the gaoler for the wild excitement of the chase. Cotton will come forward as before, though in scantier quantities, and at prices enhanced by enormous premiums paid to the insurance-offices, which will encounter gambling risks, and pocket gambling profits. The only mode, as it seems to us, by which this issue can be prevented, is by the Confederate Government really doing as they threaten, and insisting on all produce being retained on the plantations; but this, in vulgar phrase, would be (as we have shown) "cutting off their nose to spite their face." The cotton, whether captured or not, if sold, would be paid for by English merchants or by English insurers, and the proceeds would be equally available for the needs of the Secessionist Government.

It now only remains to consider the last question, viz. "What is the prospect of an early termination of the war?" This offers a wide field for conjecture, but for conjecture only. No one—perhaps not even the leaders on either side—*knows* any thing upon the subject. No prudent man will give a confident opinion of any sort. All we can do is to state dispassionately the conflicting probabilities. In favour of an obstinate continuance of the struggle, it may be urged that the passions of both parties are fearfully exasperated; that the South believes itself to be fighting for independence and for safety; that the North feels itself to be fighting for empire and to avoid humiliation; and that the slavery question is beginning to exacerbate the strife by the fanaticism of abolition on the one side, and the phrensy of personal peril and menaced proprietorship on the other. The Southerners are confident, contemptuous, and have no dream of yielding one iota of their demand. The Northerners have only been stimulated to renewed and more serious efforts by the disaster of Bull's Run—the disgrace and mortification of which must be wiped away before terms of accommodation can even be listened to. The war-party in the North, too, are swelled and strengthened, and their antagonists silenced, by a large number of active, energetic, rascally politicians, who have vast sinister and pecuniary interests in the prolongation of hostilities. There *may* be a large peace-party; but if so, it is cowed most effectually for the present. Lastly, the very magnitude and difficulty of the questions which would have to be settled by negotiation, tend to discourage the first proposals for accommodation. The mighty and complicated issues in reference to the division of the territory, and the apportionment of money obligations, could be arranged with comparative facility

if either party were decidedly victorious, and in a position to dictate terms; but seem almost to defy a settlement when each belligerent is, or fancies itself, fully a match for its antagonist.

On the other hand, and in order to show that a compromise would be wise and is very probable, considerations as numerous, and apparently more cogent, are alleged. The *conquest* of the South by the North would seem to be impossible, and we believe is felt to be so by all whose passions have not blinded their perceptions. Any thing short of conquest will not meet the ostensible purpose of the war; and for no other or minor purpose does it seem rational or decent that so deplorable a conflict should be prolonged. The resources of the North, however wasted or mismanaged, are incomparably and incontestibly greater than those of their antagonists, whom they may injure and impoverish frightfully, but cannot subdue. Now to injure and impoverish gratuitously twelve millions of men who were recently fellow-citizens, and who have hitherto been, and must again become, clients, customers, and debtors, appears too foolish a course for any but men irrationally angry to pursue. The South ask only to be suffered to secede in peace, and to govern themselves in their own way; and will of course be ready to lay down their arms as soon as this privilege is granted: in the North there must be thousands—and these amongst the richest and the wisest men—who see that it must come to this, and think it much the best that it should be allowed to come to this at once. The expenses of the war are frightful; the taxation that it will necessitate must be burdensome in the extreme; and the Western States abominate a protectionist tariff nearly as much as the Eastern ones abhor direct imposts. The losses and sufferings of the merchants of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, and of those who are dependent upon them, are grievous and unparalleled, and must continue so while the war lasts. In addition to these considerations, there are two contingencies which may any day bring about a crisis and an abrupt termination of hostilities. A series of discomfitures so vexatious and disheartening as to discourage the Federalists, yet not so signal or disgraceful as to infuriate them and goad them to persistence,—or a series of operations, or a period of feeble and tedious inaction, which shall impress on the public mind a general and disgustful conviction of the incapacity of the Federal Government or the gloomy prospects of the Federal cause,—may give courage to all the malcontents to speak their minds and to show their strength; and it may then appear that those really inclined for peace are in fact, and have long been, more numerous than those virulently bent on war, but have been bullied and terrified into acquiescence until now. Or, the proclamation of General Fre-

mont, of unconditional emancipation to the slaves of rebel masters (that is, to nine-tenths of the whole number), if ratified and adopted by the Federal authorities, may awaken such Northern citizens as are still cool enough for reflection and regret to a conviction that the conflict is now assuming the gigantic dimensions, and involving the tremendous and incalculable consequences, of an Anti-Slavery struggle,—a situation which they did not foresee, and for which the great majority of them are assuredly not yet prepared. The recoil consequent upon finding themselves, by the mismanagement of incapable rulers and eager partisans, thus suddenly brought face to face with the immediate prospect of Negro insurrection, servile war, suspended cultivation, desolated territories, and the possibility of even worse calamities contingent upon the anarchy that would ensue,—may give them spirit to speak out at once, and *compel* the Government to offer terms of accommodation, before the policy just inaugurated can have spread, and while the probable issues of it are still preventible.

All these considerations seem to render the long continuance of the civil conflict extremely problematic. There is yet one other contingency to be adverted to, which is not wholly out of the question. The Washington Government from the very outset have spoken and acted towards this country with a degree of arrogance which almost implied that they had lost their heads, and were well enough inclined to provoke a quarrel. Hitherto we have made great allowance for natural irritation and excitement, and, we trust, shall continue to do so. But it may well be that the commanders of the United States navy, if they remain actuated by the same spirit, and proceed in the same cavalier fashion as heretofore in their blockading operations and their behaviour to British merchant-ships, may overstep the usages and amenities of civilised international practice in a measure which neither we nor France can overlook. In this case, though nothing would induce either Government to break or prohibit the blockade merely for their own convenience, both may find it necessary, for the protection and due rights of their own subjects, to place the blockading squadron under severe restrictions and under strong coercion, if not even to exact prompt reparation for unquestioned wrong. We sincerely trust that nothing of the sort may occur; but it would be idle to exclude such an event from our review of possible contingencies.

To sum up the whole "situation," as our neighbours would say,—there is not much certainty and not much brightness in the prospect before us; but neither is it as gloomy as some would paint it. We do not believe the war will last long, and

we do not believe that the blockade will be strict. We expect that much cotton will filter through, and that all will be liberated before many months are over. Even if no American cotton reached this country, yet if we are convinced that none *will* reach us, high prices will attract sufficient quantities from other quarters to relieve us from an actual famine,—provided, that is, no artificial proceedings on the part of other Governments shall extract from us the supply we have secured. And if our manufacturers work short time soon enough and universally enough, there will be an ample amount of employment *on the whole* to afford two-thirds wages to the operative population. But if, relying on indefinite hopes, they should defer this needful precaution, and should use up their stock too rapidly, or disseminate it too unequally, we may endure much misery and some starvation. And if the Americans shall continue their strife with inveteracy and with obstinacy, and succeed among them in sealing up their production for the year, yet should be unable to persuade our merchants that such will be the case,—prices will advance too slowly to attract from India the million of bales that we require. And if, in addition to all this, France and America, or either of them, should, in defiance of political economy and regardless of cost, adopt contrivances and bounties to drain away from us a portion of our scanty stocks, then our condition may become very serious indeed. Such a combination of unfavourable possibilities, however, we feel bound to say, we see no reason for anticipating. But every thing is harassingly uncertain.

ART. X.—THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION AT THE
PRESENT CRISIS.

Causes of the Civil War in America. By J. Lothrop Motley. Man-
waring.

It is not at first easy for an ordinary Englishman to appreciate adequately the favourite arguments which the most cultivated and best American writers use at the present juncture. It seems to him that they are arguments befitting lawyers, not arguments befitting statesmen. They appear only to prove that a certain written document, called the Constitution of the United States, expressly forbids the conduct which the Southern States are consistently pursuing, and that therefore such conduct is culpable as well as illegal. Very few Englishmen will deny either the premiss or the conclusion considered in themselves. It is certain that the Constitution does forbid

what the slave States are doing; it is equally certain, that their policy is as mean, as unjustifiable, and every way as discreditable, as was ever pursued by any public bodies equally powerful and equally cultivated. But nevertheless an argument from the mere letter of a written Constitution will hardly convince any Englishman. He knows that all written documents must be very meagre; that the best of them must often be unsatisfactory; that most of them contain many errors; that the best of them are remarkable for strange omissions; that all of them will fail utterly when applied to a state of things different from any which its authors ever imagined. The complexity of politics is thoroughly comprehended by every Englishman,—the complexity of our history has engraved it on our mind; the complexity of our polity is a daily memento of it,—and no one in England will be much impressed by any arguments which tacitly assume that the limited clauses of an old State-paper can provide for all coming cases, and for ever regulate the future.

It is worth while, however, to examine the American Constitution at the present juncture. No remarkable aspect of the great events which are occurring among our nearest national kindred and our most important trading connexions in our own times, can be wisely neglected; and it will be easy to show that the Constitution of the United States is now failing from the necessary consequence of an inherent ineradicable defect; that more than one of its thoughtful framers perceived that it must fail under similar circumstances; and that the irremediable results of this latent defect have been aggravated partly by the corruptions which the Constitution has contracted in the progress of time, and yet more by certain elaborate provisions which were believed to be the best attainable safeguards against analogous dangers and difficulties.

Like most of the great products of the Anglo-Saxon race, the American Constitution was the result of a pressing necessity, and was a compromise between two extreme plans for meeting that necessity. It was framed in a time of gloom and confusion. The "revolted colonies," as Englishmen then called them, had been successful in their revolt; but they had been successful in nothing else. They had thrown off the yoke of the English Government; but they had founded no efficient or solid government of their own. They had been united by a temporary common sentiment,—by a common antipathy to the interference of the mother country; but the binding efficacy of that feeling ceased when their independence of the mother country had been definitively recognised. Nor was there any other strong bond of union which could supply its place. The Ame-

rican colonies had been founded by very different kinds of persons, at very different periods of English history. They had respectively taken the impress of the class of Englishmen who had framed them: Virginia had the mark of the aristocratic class; Massachusetts of the Puritan; Pennsylvania of the Quakers. The modern colonies of England are of a single type; they are founded by a single class, from a single motive. Those who now leave England are, with some exceptions, but still for the most part and as a rule, a rough and energetic race, who feel that they cannot earn as much money as they wish in England, and who hope and believe that they will be able to earn that money elsewhere. They are driven from home by the want of a satisfactory subsistence, and that subsistence is all they care or seek to find elsewhere. To every other class but this, England is too pleasant a residence for them to dream of leaving it for the antipodes. With our early colonies it was otherwise. When they were founded, England was a very unpleasant place for very many people. As long as the now-balanced structure of our composite society was in the process of formation, one class obtained a temporary ascendancy at one time, and another class at another time. At each period they made England an uncomfortable place of residence for all who did not coincide in their notions of politics, and who would not subscribe to their tenets of religion. At such periods the dissident class threw off a swarm to settle in America; and thus our old colonies were first formed.

No one can be surprised that communities with such a beginning should have acquired strong antipathies to one another. Even at the present day, the antipathy of the inhabitants of South Carolina to the people of Boston, the dislike of Kentuckians to New Yorkers, has surprised attentive observers. But when their independence was first recognised, such feelings were infinitely more intense. The original founders of the colonies had hated one another at home. Those colonies were near neighbours in a rude country, and the occasional collision of petty interests had kept alive the original antipathy of each class to its antagonistic class, of each sect to its antagonistic sect. M. de Tocqueville remarked, that even in his time there was no national patriotism in America, but only a *State* patriotism; and though, in 1833, this remark was perhaps exaggerated, it would have been, fifty years before, only the literal expression of an indisputable fact. The name "American" had scarcely as yet any political signification,—it was a "geographical expression."

Grave practical difficulties of detail, too, oppressed the new community. The war with England had been commenced by a body calling itself a Congress, but very different from the el-

borate and composite body which we now know by that name. It was a simple *committee* of delegates from the different States, which could *recommend* to those States whatever military measures it thought advisable, but had no greater power or function whatever. It was in no sense a government. It had no *coercive* jurisdiction, could compel nothing, and enforce nothing. It was an advising council, which had no resources of its own, and could only rely on its dignified position, and the obvious necessity of united opposition to the common enemy. But, as might be anticipated, so frail an organisation was entirely inadequate to the rough purposes of revolutionary warfare. It could not meet a pressing difficulty; and it did not meet it. It worked well when it was not wanted,—when all the States were unanimous; but it was insufficient when the States began to disagree,—at the very moment for which it was required.

The responsible leaders of the revolutionary struggle felt the necessity of a closer bond; and in March 1781, nearly five years after the Declaration of Independence, the first real American Government was formed. It was called the Confederation, and was very simple in its structure. There was no complicated apparatus of President and Vice-president, such as we are now familiar with; no Supreme Court, no House of Representatives. The Confederation rather resembled what existed previously than what exists at present. There was, as before, a committee of delegates from the different States, and there was nothing else: this was the whole government; but this was *not*, as before, simply a committee with powers of recommendation. It could by its own authority make peace and war, establish armies, contract debts, coin money, issue a paper currency, and send ambassadors to foreign nations. It could in theory, and according to its letter, perform all the ordinary acts and functions of sovereignty. It did, in fact, perform the greatest act of sovereignty, as a lawyer would reckon it, that could be conceived. By signing a peace with England, it secured *its own* existence. Being a loose aggregate of revolted colonies, it obtained a recognition by the mother country against which these colonies had revolted. In the face of Europe, and in the face of England more especially, it maintained the appearance of an organised, regular, and adequate government.

It really was, however, very inadequate. Some one has said that the true way to test the practical operation of any constitution is to ask, "How do you get *money* under it?" This is certainly an American mode of testing a polity, and according to this criterion the "perpetual Confederation" was an egregious failure. "You could not get *dollars* by means of it at all." The national Congress could incur liabilities, but it

could not impose taxation. It could, as we have explained, raise an army, contract a debt, issue a credit currency; but it could not of itself, and by its own authority, levy a penny. *The States* had retained in their own hands the exclusive power of imposing taxes. Congress could only *require* the several States to find certain quotas of money, and in the event of their not finding them could go to war with them. As a theorist would anticipate, the simplest alternative happened. The States did not find the money, and the Congress did not go to war with them. The debts of the Union were undischarged; the soldiers, even the French soldiers, who had achieved its independence, were unpaid; and the financial conditions of the Treaty of Independence with England were unfulfilled. Congress could do nothing, and the States would do nothing. Other smaller difficulties, too, were accumulating. The large unoccupied territory of the American continent required care; England was irritated at the non-completion or the infraction of several of the articles of peace; petty quarrels between the States on vexing minutiae were constantly beginning, and were rarely ending. The impotence of Congress was becoming proverbial, and the entire country was discouraged. In the correspondence of Washington and those around him, it is evident that they asked themselves with doubt and despondency, "After all, will America be a *nation*?"

Two schemes floated in the public mind for remedying these evils. It was the opinion of some of the wisest American statesmen, and especially of Hamilton, the greatest political philosopher among them, that it would be better to establish an *omnipotent* Federal Government, which should be to America what the English Government was to England, which should have the full legislative, the full executive, the full judicial power which a sovereign government possesses in ordinary States.*

* As Hamilton's plan is not easily accessible in this country, and may have some interest at the present moment, when some persons, at least, are desirous of attempting a similar experiment, we give it at length.

"The following Paper was read by Col. Hamilton, as containing his ideas of a suitable plan of Government for the United States.

"1. The supreme legislative power of the United States of America to be vested in two distinct bodies of men, the one to be called the assembly, the other the senate, who, together, shall form the legislature of the United States, with power to pass all laws whatsoever, subject to the negative hereafter mentioned.

"2. The assembly to consist of persons elected by the people, to serve for three years.

"3. The senate to consist of persons elected to serve during good behaviour; their election to be made by electors chosen for that purpose by the people. In order to this, the States to be divided into election districts. On the death, removal, or resignation of any senator, his place to be filled out of the district from which he came.

"4. The supreme executive authority of the United States to be vested in a

Hamilton proposed that the "supreme legislative power of the United States should be vested in two distinct bodies of men," who should have power to pass *all laws whatever*, subject to a veto in a governor or first magistrate. For the choice of the members of these bodies, he would have divided the country into electoral districts, and no State *as such* would have elected a single representative to the united legislature, or have been capable of any function or voice in the Constitution of the Union. "All laws of the particular States contrary to the Constitution of the Union or *laws of the United States* were to be utterly void." And "the better to prevent such laws being passed, the governor or president of each State" was to be appointed by the general Government, was to have a negative upon all laws "about to be passed therein." No State was to have any forces, land or naval; and the militia of all the States were to be under the exclusive direction of the general Government of the United States, which alone was to appoint and

governor, to be elected to serve during good behaviour. His election to be made by electors chosen by electors, chosen by the people, in the election districts aforesaid. His authorities and functions to be as follows:

"To have a negative upon all laws about to be passed, and the execution of all laws passed; to have the entire direction of war, when authorised, or begun; to have, with the advice and approbation of the senate, the power of making all treaties; to have the sole appointment of the heads or chief officers of the departments of finance, war, and foreign affairs; to have the nomination of all other officers (ambassadors to foreign nations included) subject to the approbation or rejection of the senate; to have the power of pardoning all offences, except treason, which he shall not pardon without the approbation of the senate.

"5. On the death, resignation, or removal of the governor, his authorities to be exercised by the president of the senate, until a successor be appointed.

"6. The senate to have the sole power of declaring war; the power of advising and approving all treaties; the power of approving or rejecting all appointments of officers, except the heads or chiefs of the departments of finance, war, and foreign affairs.

"7. The supreme judicial authority of the United States to be vested in judges, to hold their offices during good behaviour, with adequate and permanent salaries. This court to have original jurisdiction in all causes of capture, and an appellate jurisdiction in all causes in which the revenues of the general government, or the citizens of foreign nations, are concerned.

"8. The legislature of the United States to have power to institute courts in each State, for the determination of all matters of general concern.

"9. The governors, senators, and all officers of the United States to be liable to impeachment for mal and corrupt conduct; and, upon conviction, to be removed from office, and disqualified from holding any place of trust or profit. All impeachments to be tried by a court to consist of the chief, or senior judge of the superior court of law in each State; provided that such judge hold his place during good behaviour, and have a permanent salary.

"10. All laws of the particular States contrary to the constitution or laws of the United States to be utterly void. And the better to prevent such laws being passed, the governor or president of each State shall be appointed by the general government, and shall have a negative upon the laws about to be passed in the State of which he is governor, or president.

"11. No State to have any forces, land or naval; and the militia of all the States to be under the sole and exclusive direction of the United States; the officers of which to be appointed and commissioned by them."

commission their officers. In practice this scheme would have reduced the existing States to the condition of mere municipalities; they would have retained extensive powers of interior regulation, but they would have lost all the higher functions of government, all control over any matters not exclusively their own; they would have continued to be, so to say, County Boards for county matters, but they would have had no share in the sovereign direction of general affairs. They would have been as restricted, as isolated, as the Corporations of Liverpool and Bristol are under the Constitution of England.

A theorist would perhaps be inclined to regret that some such plan as that of Hamilton was not eventually chosen. At the present moment political speculators in England are singularly inclined to schemes of political unity. The striking example of Italy has given a natural stimulus to them. We have seen a great nation which had long been divided combine into what, we hope, will be a permanent State at the bidding of a few able and active men, and, as it seems to the many, by a kind of political enchantment. The change, when regarded from a distance, has appeared so easy, that we underestimate its real difficulties, and are inclined to erect one of the most exceptional events in history into an ordinary precedent and example. But the state of America eighty years since may easily show us why such events have been rare in history; why *locality* has been called an instinct in the human mind; why large States have almost always been produced by the constraining vigour of some single conquering power. Each of the States of North America was a little commonwealth, with a vigorous political life. Each one of them had its ministry, its opposition, its elections, its local questions; each had its own political atmosphere, each its peculiar ambitions. Even if the different States had been well disposed to one another, it would have been difficult to induce all of them—especially to induce the smaller among them—to give up this local political animation. The Italian States seem to have relinquished it; but, in truth, they had little to relinquish. They were *despotically* governed. None of them had within their own boundaries that vast accumulation of ideas and sentiments and hopes, of love and hatred, which we call a “political life.” The best men in Tuscany were not sacrificing a cherished career or an accustomed existence in favouring the expulsion of the Grand Duke; for so long as he remained they had no influence. After his expulsion the question of national unity or of local division could be considered fairly and impartially. It was not so in America: there were in every one of the States men who must have relinquished evident power, attainable prox-

imate ambition,—the dearest of ambitions, the power of governing the persons whom they had known all their lives, and with whom they had all their lives been in actual political competition,—for the sake of an unknown “general government;” which was an abstraction which could have excited no living attachment, in which but a very few could take a prominent or gratifying share. Nor, as we have explained, were the different States mutually well disposed. The differences of their origin still embittered, and long seemed likely to embitter, the local squabbles of years. The saying of the Swiss Antifederalist, “My shirt is dearer to me than my coat,” was the animating spirit of nine-tenths of North America. The little State of Delaware refused even to *consider* the abolition of the fifth article of the Confederation, which preserved the separate existence and the primitive equality of the separate States by enacting that each should have one vote only. The plan of Hamilton could not be carried, and he was too wise a statesman to regard it as much better than a tempting dream.

The second extreme suggestion for amending the “perpetual Confederation” would have been equivalent in practice to a continuance of that Confederation very much as it was. Its theoretical letter proposed indeed to give additional powers to the central Congress, but the States were to be still the component elements in the Constitution. The Congress was still to have no other power than that of requiring from these States what money it needed. It would still be compelled to declare war against them if that money was in arrear. It would still have been in the condition graphically delineated by a contemporary statesman: “By this political compact the United States in Congress have exclusive power for the following purposes, without being able to execute one of them. They may make and conclude treaties; but can only recommend the observance of them. They may appoint ambassadors; but cannot defray even the expenses of their tables. They may borrow money in their own name on the faith of the Union; but cannot pay a dollar. They may coin money; but they cannot purchase an ounce of bullion. They may make war, and determine what number of troops are necessary; but cannot raise a single soldier. *In short, they may declare every thing, but do nothing.*” Thus the second suggestion for remedying the pressing evils of America was as inefficient as the first had been impracticable.

The selected Constitution was a mean between the two. As the State Governments could not be abolished, and could not be entirely divested of their sovereign rights, a new Government was created, superior to them in certain specified matters, and having independent means of action with reference to those

matters, but in all other things leaving their previous functions unrestricted, and their actual authority unimpaired. By the active Constitution the central Congress has the right of imposing certain specified revenues, and the power of collecting them throughout each State by officers of its exclusive appointment. It has, as under the Confederation, the power of making peace and proclaiming war,—of engaging soldiers and contracting debts; but it now has likewise a power of collecting a revenue to remunerate those soldiers, and to pay those debts by its own authority, and without the consent of any subordinate body. It has not now to require obedience from the States in their corporate capacity, but to compel the obedience of individuals throughout those States in their natural isolation, and according to the ordinary custom of Governments.

We can now understand the answer of an American architect who was asked the difference between a Federation and Union. "Why," he said, "a Federation is a Union *with a top to it*." There is in the United States, not simply an assemblage of individual sovereign States, but also a *super-sovereign* State, which has its officers side by side with theirs, its revenue side by side with theirs, its law-courts side by side with theirs, its authority on a limited number of enumerated points superior even to theirs. No political invention has been more praised than this one. It has been truly described as the most valuable addition to the resources of political philosophy ever made by professed constitution-makers. Greater things have grown up among great nations; studious thinkers have speculated on better devices; but nothing so remarkable was perhaps ever struck out on the impulse of the moment by persons actually charged with the practical duty of making a Constitution. American writers are naturally proud of it; and it would be easy to collect from European writers of eminence an imposing series of encomiums upon its excellence.

Yet now that we have before us the pointed illustration of recent events, it is not difficult to see that such an institution is only adapted to circumstances exceptionally favourable, and that under a very probable train of circumstances it must fail from inherent defect. It is essentially a collection of *imperia in imperio*. It rather displays than conceals the grave disadvantages which have made that name so very unpopular. Each State is a subordinate Republic, and yet the entire Union is but a single Republic. Each State in some sense a centre of *disunion*. Each State attracts to itself a share of political attachment, has separate interests, real or supposed, has a separate set of public men anxious to increase its importance,—upon which their own depends,—anxious to weaken the power of the United Govern-

ment, by which theirs is overshadowed. At every critical period the sinister influence of the *imperium in imperio* will be felt; at every such period the cry of each subordinate aggregate will be, "Our interests are threatened, our authority diminished, our rights attacked."

A presidential election is the very event of all others to excite these dangerous sentiments. It places the entire policy of the Union upon a single hazard. A particular moment is selected when the ruler for a term of years is to be chosen. That ruler has very substantial power of various kinds; he has immense patronage, a legislative veto, great executive authority, and, what is yet more to the present purpose, he has a supreme position in society, which indefinitely attracts this popular choice, and indefinitely aggravates the intensity of the canvass. A homogeneous and simple State, with no subordinate rivals within its frontiers, might well fear to encounter such a struggle. What, then, must be the certain result in a Federal Union whenever a large minority of the States should consider their rights and their interests to be identified with the election or with the rejection of any one presidential candidate? What can we anticipate when the greatest dividing force, the overt choice of a supreme ruler, after canvass and struggle and controversy,—is applied to the most separable of political communities,—to a disjointed aggregate of States, whose local importance has been legally fostered, whose separate existence has been heedfully cherished, whose political vitality is older and more powerful than the bond of constitutional union? Surely, according to every canon of probability, we must confidently anticipate a separation whenever the sinister interest of a large and unconquerable section of the States shall be attacked, or be conceived to be attacked, by the selection of a supreme head for the whole nation. Independently of matters of detail, independently of the actual power which every supreme magistrate possesses, it is too much to expect that a considerable number of vigorous and active communities will, *if they can help it*, be governed by a person who is the *symbol* of the doctrine that they must hate and fear, and who is just elected by their special foes precisely because he is that symbol.

More than one of the most discerning of the framers of the American Constitution seems not only to have perceived the inherent defects of the work in which he had participated, but to have had a prevision of the real source from which ultimate danger was to be foreboded. Most of the controversies in the Convention which framed the Constitution had turned, in several forms, on the various consequences of the very different magnitude of the States which were about to join. The large States

were anxious to be strong; the small States were fearful of being weak. But Mr. Madison, one of the most judicious men of that time, clearly perceived that, though this was naturally the principal difficulty in securing the voluntary adoption by the several States of any proposed Constitution, it would not be an equally menacing danger to the continuance of the Union when that Constitution was once established. The small States shrank from binding themselves to a Union, exactly because they felt that they must remain in it if they entered. If they once contracted to combine with stronger countries, the superior power of those countries would enforce an adherence to the bargain. The really formidable danger which threatened the American Union was the possibility of a difference of opinion between classes of States of which no one was immeasurably stronger than the other. This Madison saw. He observed:—

“I would always exclude inconsistent principles in framing a system of government. The difficulty of getting its defects amended are great, and sometimes insurmountable. The Virginia State government was the first which was made, and though its defects are evident to every person, we cannot get it amended. The Dutch have made four several attempts to amend their system without success. The few alterations made in it were by tumult and faction, and for the worse. If there was real danger, I would give the smaller States the defensive weapons; but there is none from that quarter. The great danger to our general government is the great Southern and Northern interests of the continent being opposed to each other. Look to the votes in Congress, and most of them stand divided by the geography of the country, not according to the size of the States.”

It was not, indeed, very difficult for the eye of a practised politician to discern the great diversity between the Northern and Southern societies. It was even then conspicuous to the eye of the least gifted observer. An accomplished French writer, whose essay was written before the perceptions of all of us were sharpened by recent events, has thus described it: “Au Sud, le sol appartenait à de grands propriétaires entourés d’esclaves et de petits cultivateurs. Les substitutions et le droit d’aînesse perpétuaient les richesses et le pouvoir dans une aristocratie qui occupait presque toutes les fonctions publiques. Le culte anglican était celui de l’État. La société et l’Église étaient constituées d’une façon hiérarchique. Au Nord, au contraire, l’esprit d’égalité régnait dans la société comme dans l’Église: ‘Je crains beaucoup les effets de cette diversité de mœurs et d’institutions,’ écrivait John Adams à Joseph Hawley, le 25 novembre 1775; ‘elle deviendra fatale si de part et d’autre on ne met beaucoup de prudence, de tolérance, de condescendance.

Des changements dans les constitutions du Sud seront nécessaires si la guerre continue; ils pourront seuls rapprocher toutes les parties du continent.” Probably, however, no one in those times anticipated the rapidity with which those differences would develop, for no one apprehended the practical working of slavery. Many persons unquestionably understood the immediate benefit with which it buys an insidious admission into uncultivated countries; but perhaps no one understood at how great price of ultimate evil that benefit would probably be purchased. No one could be expected to perceive that both the temporary benefit and the ultimate disadvantages resembled one another in being opposed to the continuance of the newly-formed Union; for even at the present day, and after a very painful experience, it is not steadily perceived by all of us.

Slavery is the one institution which effectually counteracts the assimilative force to which all new countries are subject,—that force which makes all men alike there, and which stamps upon the communities themselves so many common features. In such countries men are struggling with the wilderness; they are in daily conflict with the rough powers of nature, and from them they acquire a hardness and a roughness somewhat like their own. They cannot cultivate the luxuries of leisure, for they have no leisure. They must be mending their fences, or cooking their victuals, or mending their clothes. They cannot be expected to excel in the graces of refinement, for these require fastidious meditation and access to great examples, and neither of these are possible to hard-worked men at the end of the earth. A certain democracy in such circumstances rises like a natural growth of the soil. An even equality in mind and manners, if not in political institutions, is inevitably forced upon those whose character is pressed upon by the same rude forces, who have substantially the same difficulties, who lead in all material points the same life. All are struggling with the primitive difficulties of uncivilised existence, and all are retarded by that struggle at the same low level of instruction and refinement.

Slavery breaks this dead level, and it is the only available device that does so. The owner of a few slaves, partly employed in the service of his house and partly in the cultivation of his land, has a good deal of leisure, and is not exposed to any very brutalising temptation. It is his interest to treat his slaves well, and in ordinary circumstances he does treat them well. They give him the means of refinement, and the opportunities of culture: they receive from him good clothing, a protective *surveillance*, and some little moral improvement. Washington was such a slave-owner, and it is probable that at Mount Vernon what may be called the temptation of slavery presented itself in

its strongest and most attractive form. At all events, it is certain that, by the irresistible influence of superior leisure and superior culture, the Virginian slave-owner acquired a singular preëminence in the revolutionary struggle, moved the bitter jealousy of all his contemporaries, and bestowed an indefinite benefit upon posterity. But even this beneficial effect of slavery, momentary as it was, was not beneficial to the Union as such: it did not strengthen, but weakened the uniting bond; it introduced an element of difference between State and State, which stimulated bitter envy, and suggested constant division. In the correspondence of the first race of Northern statesmen, a dangerous jealousy of the superior political abilities of the South is frequently to be traced.

The immense price, however, which has been paid for the short-lived benefit of slavery has been immeasurably more dangerous to the Union than the benefit itself. As we all perceive, it is tearing it in two. In the progress of time slave-owning becomes an investment of mercantile capital, and slaves are regarded, not as personal dependents, but as impersonal things. The necessities of modern manufacture require an immense production of raw material, and in certain circumstances slaves can be beneficially employed on a large scale to raise that material. The evils of slavery are developed at once. The owner of a few slaves whom he sees every day will commonly treat them kindly enough; but the owner of several gangs, on several different plantations, has no similar motive. His good feelings are not much appealed to in their favour; he does not know them by name, he does not know them by sight; they are to him instruments of production, which he bought at such and such a price, which cost so many dollars, which must be made to yield so many dollars. He is often brutalised by working them cruelly; he is still oftener brutalised in other ways by the infinite temptations which a large mass of subject men and subject women inevitably offer to tyranny and to lust. Nor in such a state of society does slavery monopolise the charm which at first attracted men to it. When large capitals have been accumulated, there will be without it sufficient opportunities for moderate leisure and for reasonable refinement. Slavery buys its admission with the attractions of Mount Vernon; it develops its awful consequences in lonely plantations on the banks of the Mississippi, whose owner wants cotton, and wants only cotton; where he himself, or some manager whom he pays, employs himself in brutalities to black men, and enjoys himself in brutalities to black women. The events of this year exhibit the result. The probable disunion of the South and the North is but the inevitable consequence of the

existing moral contrast. It is not possible to retain in voluntary combination such a community as Massachusetts and communities whose ruling element is such a slavery as that we have described.

We see, therefore, from this brief survey, that we have no cause to wonder even at the almost magical consequences of Mr. Lincoln's election. It was the sort of event which was most likely to produce such consequences. A Republic of United States, which put up the first magistracy to periodical popular election, was most likely to part asunder when fundamental contrasts in character, ideas, and habits had long been growing rapidly between two very large classes of States, and when one of these classes persisted in electing to the first place in the Republic the very person who embodied the aim and tendencies most odious to the other class. It is evident, too, that the Northern and Southern States cannot hope to continue united under the present Constitution, or to form parts of the same Federal Republic under any Constitution whatever. No free State can rule an unwilling dependency of large size, except by excluding that dependency from all share in its own freedom. If Ireland unanimously wished to withdraw from the government of England, we could not rule it without excluding its representatives from Parliament. We know what the Irish members are now: we know that they are not very convenient; we know that they seem invented to give trouble; but who can imagine a House of Commons in which one hundred eager Irish members were united by a consistent intention to make an English government impossible? who can imagine the Parliamentary consequences of so great a voting power, used not for the purposes of construction, but exclusively for those of destruction? who can suppose that during a series of years we could keep any firm administration at all with so powerful a force ever ready to combine with every one who desired to pull down, and never ready to combine with any one who wished to set up? Yet this is a faint example of what the American Congress would be with a regularly organised Southern opposition retained within the Union by force, but desirous to leave it, anxious to destroy it; never voting for any thing except with this object; never voting against any thing save on that account. And such would be the inevitable result of the victory of the North. The Southern States are sure to preserve an intense local feeling for many years. History shows that they have always had it; the occupations and the habits of such bodies insure their having it. Even if the North were to conquer them now, their whole political force for many years would unquestionably be devoted to the attainment of disunion. Who can doubt that they would eventually obtain it by rendering all government impossi-

ble upon any lesser conditions? A free union is essentially voluntary. Sir Creswell Creswell may decree the restitution of matrimonial rights; but even he would not venture to decree the enforcement on an unwilling State of a promise to combine with another into a Parliamentary union.

Some of the framers of the American Constitution, as we have seen, foresaw its principal danger, and they did all which they could to provide against it. They erected a *Supreme Court*, a preëminent judicial tribunal, which is empowered to decide causes between State and State, and between any State and the Federal Government. And on many small, and on some important, matters, this Court has worked very well; it has given able, if not always satisfactory, judgments on various points of State controversy; it has provided a tolerably fair umpire, and has thus prevented many small *quæstiuncule* from growing into grave questions. It was excellent upon minor points; it has been useless upon the greatest. When, as recently, great passions have been aroused, great interests at stake, great issues clearly drawn out, a reference to the Supreme Court has not even been contemplated. No judicial establishment could, indeed, be useful in an extra-judicial matter; no law decide what is beyond the competence of law; no supplementary provision, however ingenious, cure the essential and inseparable defects of a Federal Union.

The steadily augmenting power of the lower orders in America has naturally augmented the dangers of their Federal Union. In almost all the States there was, at the time the Constitution of the Union was originally framed, a property qualification, in some States a high one, requisite for the possession of the most popular form of suffrage. Almost all these qualifications have now been swept away, and a dead level of universal suffrage runs, more or less, over the whole length of the United States. The external consequences, as we all know, have not been beneficial: the foreign policy of the Union has been a perplexing difficulty to European nations, and especially to England, for many years. Nor have the internal consequences been better. The most enthusiastic advocates of a democratic government will admit that it is both an impulsive and a contentious government. Its special characteristic is, that it places the entire control over the political action of the whole State in the hands of the common labourers, who are of all classes the least instructed—of all the most aggressive—of all the most likely to be influenced by local animosity—of all the most likely to exaggerate every momentary sentiment—of all the least likely to be capable of a considerable toleration for the constant oppositions of opinion, the not unfrequent differences of interest, and

the occasional unreasonableness of other States. In democracies, local feuds are commonly more lasting and more bitter than in States of other kinds; and those enmities commonly become more bitter in proportion to the greater nearness of relation, the greater closeness of political connexion, and the greater contrast of disposition, temper, and internal circumstances. What intensity of bitterness was then to be anticipated in a so-called Union, in which two distinct sets of democracies—the Southern and the Northern, the slave-holding and the non-slave-holding—have been for many years augmenting in contrast to, and increasing in antipathy to, one another! The existing crisis is only the natural consequence, the inevitable development, of a long antagonism between these two species of Republics, in both of which the most intolerant members are absolute rulers, and each of which presented characteristics which the hidden instincts of the other, even more than its conscious opinion, regarded first as irritating and then as dangerous. The progress of democracy has affected not only the State Government, but the Federal Government. The House of Representatives in the latter is elected by the same persons who choose the most popular branch of the legislature in the former. As the State Governments have become more democratic, the Federal Government has inevitably become more so likewise. To this gradual corruption of the American democracy it is principally owing that Europe at large, and England especially, have not grieved much at the close proximity of its probable fall, but perhaps rejoiced at the prospect of some marked change from a policy which was so inconvenient to its neighbours, which must be attended to because its range was so wide, and the physical force under its direction was so large, but of which the events were mean, the actors base, and the working inexplicable. A low vulgarity, indefinable but undeniable, has deeply displeased the cultivated mind of Europe; and the American Union will fall, if it does fall, little regretted even by those whose race is akin, whose language is identical, whose weightiest opinions are on most subjects the same as theirs. The unpleasantness of *mob* government has never before been exemplified so conspicuously, for it never before has worked upon so large a scene.

These latter truths are very familiar. The evils of democracy and the dangers of democracy are great commonplaces in our speculation, though also formidable perils in our practice. But it is not commonplace to observe, that the existing crisis in America has been intensified almost as much by the precautions which the original founders of the Constitution took to ward off what they well knew to be the characteristic evils of democracy, as by those evils themselves. We have been so

much accustomed to hear the "United States" extolled as the special land of democratic liberty, to hear their Constitution praised as the unmixed embodiment of uncontrolled popular power,—that we have forgotten how many restrictive provisions that Constitution contains, and how anxiously its framers endeavoured to provide against the special defects of a purely popular polity.

It is not too much to say that a valuable addition to the accumulations of Conservative oratory might be extracted from the debates of the Convention which framed the American revolution. The two objects which its most intelligent framers were mainly bent on attaining, were, security against the momentary caprice of a purely numerical majority, and some effective provision for the maintenance of a strong executive. What would Mr. Bright say to the following speech of Mr. Morris, not by any means the most conservative member of the Convention?

"The two branches, so equally poised, cannot have their due weight. It is confessed, on all hands, that the second branch ought to be a check on the first; for without its having this effect it is perfectly useless. The first branch, originating from the people, will ever be subject to *precipitancy, changeability, and excess*. Experience evinces the truth of this remark without having recourse to reading. This can only be checked by *ability and virtue* in the second branch. On your present system, can you suppose that one branch will possess it more than the other? The second branch ought to be composed of men of great and established property—an *aristocracy*; men who from pride will support consistency and permanency; and to make them completely independent, they must be chosen *for life*, or they will be a useless body. Such an aristocratic body will keep down the turbulence of democracy. But if you elect them for a shorter period, they will be only a name, and we had better be without them. Thus constituted, I hope they will show us the weight of aristocracy.

"History proves, I admit, that the men of large property will uniformly endeavour to establish tyranny. How, then, shall we ward off this evil? Give them the second branch, and you secure their weight for the *public good*. They become responsible for their conduct, and this lust of power will ever be checked by the democratic branch, and thus form a stability in your Government. But if we continue changing our measures by the breath of democracy, who will confide in our engagements? who will trust us? Ask any person whether he reposes any confidence in the Government of Congress, or that of the State of Pennsylvania; he will readily answer you, no. Ask him the reason; and he will tell you it is because he has no confidence in their stability.

"You intend also that the second branch shall be incapable of holding any office in the general Government. It is a dangerous expedient. They ought to have every inducement to be interested in your Government. Deprive them of this right, and they will become inattentive to your welfare. The wealthy will ever exist; and you never can be safe unless you gratify them as a body, in the pursuit of honour and profit. Prevent them by positive institutions, and they will proceed in some left-handed way. A son may want a place—you mean to prevent him from promotion. They are not to be paid for their services—they will in some way pay themselves; nor is it in your power to prevent it. It is good policy that men of property be collected in one body, to give them one common influence in your Government. Let vacancies be filled up, as they happen, by the executive. Besides, it is of little consequence, on this plan, whether the States are equally represented or not. If the State Governments have the division of many of the loaves and fishes, and the general Government few, it cannot exist. This Senate would be one of the *baubles* of the general Government. If you choose them for seven years, whether chosen by the people or the States,—whether by equal suffrage or in any other proportion,—how will they be a check? They will still have local and State prejudices. A government by compact is no government at all. You may as well go back to your Congressional Federal Government, where, in the character of ambassadors, they may form treaties for each State. I avow myself the advocate of a strong Government."

This speech, striking as it is, is only a single specimen, and not, in several respects, the most striking of many which might be cited. The predominant feeling of the predominant party in the Convention is clearly expressed in the singularly complicated provisions of the Constitution which they framed. Almost every clause of it bears witness to the anxiety of its composers for an efficient executive, and for an adequate guard against momentary popular feeling.

Unfortunately they either had not at their disposal, or did not avail themselves of, the only effectual instruments for either purpose. There is but one sufficient expedient against the tyranny of the lower orders, and that is to place the predominant (though not necessarily the exclusive) power in the hands of the higher orders. There must be some effectual *sovereign* authority in every government. In England, for example, the sovereign authority is the diffused respectable higher middle-class, which, on the whole, is predominant in the House of Commons, and in the constituencies which return it. Whatever this class emphatically wills, is immediately enacted. It hears representations from the great mass of the orders which

are below, it hears other and better-expressed representations from the higher classes, which are above it. But it uses these only as materials by which to form a better judgment. If the House of Commons distinctly expresses an emphatic opinion, no other body or person or functionary hopes to oppose it, or dreams of doing so. Our security against tyranny is the reasonableness, the respectable cultivation, the business-like moderation of this governing class itself; if that class did not possess those qualities, the rest of the community would be always in danger, and very frequently be oppressed.

The framers of the American Constitution chose a very different expedient. They placed the predominant power in the hands of the numerical majority of the population, and hoped to restrain and balance it by paper checks and constitutional stratagems. At the present time, almost every one of their ingenious devices has aggravated the calamities of their descendants.

The mode in which the President of the United States is chosen is the most complicated which could well be imagined. A reader of the Constitution, uninformed as to the circumstances of its origin and the intentions of its framers, would imagine that complexity had sometimes been chosen as such, and for its own sake. Each, however, of these singular details was introduced with a very definite object.

"Each State," it is provided, "shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress; but no senator or representative, or person holding an office of trust or profit under the United States, shall be appointed an elector.

"The electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by ballot for two persons, of whom one at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a list of all the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each: which list they shall sign and certify, and transmit, sealed, to the seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates; and the votes shall then be counted. The person having the greatest number of votes shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such majority, and have an equal number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately choose by ballot one of them for President; and if no person have a majority, then, from the five highest on the list, the said House shall in like

manner choose the President. But in choosing the President the votes shall be taken by States, the representation from each State having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the States, and a majority of all the States shall be necessary to a choice. In every case, after the choice of the President, the person having the greatest number of votes of the electors shall be the Vice-president. But if there should remain two or more who have equal votes, the Senate shall choose from them by ballot the Vice-president.

"The Congress may determine the time of choosing the electors, and the day on which they shall give their votes: which day shall be the same throughout the United States."

"In pursuance of the authority given by the latter clause," says Mr. Justice Story, "Congress in 1792 passed an act, declaring that the electors shall be appointed in each State within thirty-four days preceding the first Wednesday in December, in every fourth year succeeding the last election of President, according to the apportionment of representatives and senators then existing. The electors chosen are required to meet and give their votes on the first said Wednesday of December, in every fourth year succeeding the last election of President, according to the apportionment of representatives and senators then existing. The electors chosen are required to meet and give their votes on the said first Wednesday of December, at such place in each State as shall be directed by the legislature thereof. They are then to make and sign three certificates of all the votes by them given, and to seal up the same, certifying on each that a list of the votes of such State for President and Vice-president is contained therein; and shall appoint a person to take charge of and deliver one of the same certificates to the President of the Senate at the seat of Government, before the first Wednesday of January then next ensuing; another of the certificates is to be forwarded forthwith by the post-office to the President of the Senate at the seat of Government; and the third is to be delivered to the judge of the district in which the electors assembled. Other auxiliary provisions are made by the same act for the due transmission and preservation of the electoral votes, and authenticating the appointment of the electors. The President's term of office is also declared to commence on the fourth day of March next succeeding the day on which the votes of the electors shall be given."

The details of these arrangements are involved, but their purpose was simple. The framers wished the President to be chosen, not by the primary electors, but by a body of secondary electors, whom the primary were to choose, because they thought

that these *chosen choosers* would presumably be persons especially likely to make a good choice. They likewise intended that an absolute majority (a majority, that is, of more than one-half of the total number) should be requisite for a valid election; and if such majority could not be procured, that the House of Representatives, voting by States, should make the choice (in which case an absolute majority of all the *States* were likewise to be necessary); and lastly, they wished that an interval of many months—from November in one year to March in the next—should be secured for the safe transaction of the entire election.

Every part of this well-studied arrangement has produced most unanticipated results, and none more so than the last part. Nothing could be more reasonable than the regulation that a long interval should be provided for the whole complicated election; since, if the choice unexpectedly lapsed to the House of Representatives, much delay and consideration would obviously be necessary. But the consequences have been disastrous.

"At the outset of the quarrel," observes a recent writer, "the Constitution occasioned a needless danger. The South threatened to secede because Mr. Lincoln had been elected President. Under almost any other free Constitution which has ever existed, and certainly under every good one, the executive authority, whose function it was to oppose secession, would have been placed exclusively in the hands of those who were desirous so to oppose it. At an instant of violent irritation, the dissentient minority were anxious to break loose from the control of the majority. The majority were at that time, whatever may be the case now, by no means fanatical, or irritated, or overbearing. They wished to preserve the Union, and under a well-framed Constitution they would have had the power of using the force of the State to preserve the State. But not so under the American. An artificial arrangement prolongs the reign of each President many months after the election of his successor. In consequence, the executive authority was, during a considerable and critical interval, in the hands of those who by birth, habit, and sympathy were leagued with the dissentient minority. Mr. Buchanan and his ministers had always been attached to the party of the South, and were the last persons to act decisively against it. It is the opinion of many well-informed persons that there was a sufficient Unionist party in several of the seceding States to have prevented the present movement there, if the Federal Government had acted with vigour and celerity. And, whether this be so or not, it remains a singular defect in the working of the American Constitution, that it gave power at the decisive moment to those least likely to use that power well,—that just when a revolt was im-

pending, it placed the whole executive influence and the whole military force in the unfettered hands of the political associates of the revolters."

It is now known that the Southern officials purposely distributed the fleet of the Union in distant countries, placed stores of artillery where Southern rebels could easily take them, purposely disorganised the Federal army. Nothing else could be anticipated from an arrangement which placed the preparations for maintaining the Union in the exclusive control of the persons desirous to break the Union.

The scheme, too, of a double election has failed of its intended effect, but has produced grave effects which were not intended. The same writer observes:

"Nor does the accession of Mr. Lincoln place the executive power precisely where we should wish to see it. At a crisis such as America has never before seen, and as it is not, perhaps, probable she will see again, the executive authority should be in the hands of one of the most tried, trusted, and experienced statesmen of the nation. Mr. Lincoln is a nearly unknown man, who has been but little heard of, who has had little experience, who may have nerve and judgment, or may not have them, whose character, both moral and intellectual, is an unknown quantity, who must, from his previous life and defective education, be wanting in the liberal acquirements and mental training which are principal elements of an enlarged statesmanship. Nor is it true to say that the American people are to blame for this—that they chose Mr. Lincoln, and must endure the pernicious results. The *Constitution* is as much to blame as the people, probably even more so. The framers were wisely and warmly attached to the principles of liberty, and, like all such persons, were extremely anxious to guard against momentary gusts of popular opinion. They were especially desirous that the President to whom they were intrusting vast power should be the representative, not of a small section of the community, but of a really predominant part of it. They not only established a system of double election, in the hope that the 'electoral college' (of which the electors were chosen by the primary electors in each State) would exercise a real discretion in the choice of President, and be some check on popular ignorance and low violence, but they likewise provided that an absolute majority of that 'electoral college' (a majority, that is, greater than one-half of the whole) should give their votes for the elected candidate. The effect has been painfully different from the design. In reality, the 'electoral college' exercises no choice; every member of it is selected by the primitive constituency because he will vote for a certain presidential candidate (for

Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Douglas, and so on), and he does nothing but vote accordingly. The provision requiring the consent of an absolute majority has had a still worse effect; it has not been futile, for it has been pernicious. It has made it very difficult to secure *any* election.*

If every candidate stood who wished, and every elector voted for whom he pleased, there would be no election at all. Each little faction would vote for its own particular favourite, and no one would obtain the votes of half the whole nation. A very complicated apparatus of preliminary meetings, called caucuses, is therefore resorted to, and the working of these is singularly disastrous.

Every man of any mark in the whole nation has many enemies, some private, some public; he is probably the head of some section or minor party, and that minor party has its own antagonists, its special opponents, who would dislike more than any thing else that its head should on a sudden become the head of the State. Every statesman who has been long tried in public life must have had to alienate many friends, to irritate many applicants by necessary refusals, to say many things which are rankling in many bosoms. Every great man creates his own opposition; and no great man, therefore, will ever be President of the United States, except in the rarest and most exceptional cases. The object of "President makers" is to find a candidate who will conciliate the greatest number, not the person for whom there is *most* to be said, but the person against whom there is *least* to be said. In the English State, there is no great office filled in at all the same way; but in the English Church there is. "Depend on it," said a shrewd banker, not remarkable for theological zeal or scholastic learning, "I would have been Archbishop of Canterbury, if I had been in the Church. Some quiet, tame sort of man is always chosen; and I never *give offence to any one*." If he did not, he might have been President of the United States. The mode in which all conspicuous merit is gradually eliminated from the list of candidates was well illustrated at the election of Mr. Pierce.

"The candidates on the democratic side were no less than eight: General Cass, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Marcy, Mr. Butler, Mr. Houston, Mr. Lane, and Mr. Dickenson; all men 'prominently known to their party,' and the three first supported with great enthusiasm by large sections of that party throughout the Union.

"The Convention appointed by the democratic party in each State to decide which among these various candidates should be recommended for their votes at the election, assembled at Balti-

* Economist, June 1, 1861.

more for their first meeting on the 1st of June 1852. On that day General Cass obtained the greatest number of votes at the first ballot, namely 116, out of the total of 288; but a number far below the requisite majority. A few specimens of the manner in which the votes fluctuated will not be without interest. On the ninth ballot the votes were—Cass, 112; Buchanan, 87; Douglas, 39; Marcy, 28; Butler, 1; Houston, 8; Lane, 13; Dickenson, 1. On the twenty-second ballot—Cass, 33; Douglas, 80; Butler, 24; Lane, 13; Buchanan, 101; Marcy, 25; Houston, 10; Dickenson, 1. On the twenty-ninth ballot—Cass, 27. On the thirty-fifth ballot—Cass, 131; Douglas, 52; Buchanan, 32.

“On this, the sixth day of the meeting (the proceedings of and the scenes in which were fully and somewhat graphically described by the public press of both parties), a new name appeared for the first time upon the lists—that of Mr. Pierce, of New Hampshire, a gentleman well known to his friends as a lawyer of ability; also as having creditably fulfilled the duties of a member of the House of Representatives, and of the Senate of the United States; better known, however, as having joined the army as a volunteer on the breaking out of the Mexican War, and as having commanded with distinction a brigade in that war, with the rank of General. It will, nevertheless, imply no disrespect towards Mr. Pierce, if I repeat what was the universal expression, according to the public prints, throughout the Union, that no individual in the United States could have been more surprised at Mr. Pierce's nomination for the exalted and responsible office of chief magistrate of the Republic than Mr. Pierce himself. On the thirty-fifth ballot, the first in which Mr. Pierce's name appeared, he received 15 votes. On the forty-eighth, he received only 55 votes; but on the forty-ninth, the numbers voting for him were 283, out of the total of 288,—a vote which 5 more would have made unanimous.

“Mr. Pierce was accordingly recommended to the democratic constituencies throughout the Union, and was elected by a considerable majority over his Whig opponent; the numbers being, for Mr. Pierce 1,504,471, and for General Scott 1,283,174.”

What worse mode of electing a ruler could by possibility have been selected? If the wit of man had been set to devise a system specially calculated to bring to the head of affairs an incompetent man at a pressing crisis, it could not have devised one more fit; probably it would not have devised one as fit. It almost secures the rejection of tried and trained genius, and almost insures the selection of untrained and unknown mediocrity.

Nor is this the only mode, or even the chief mode in which the carefully considered provisions of the American Constitution

have, in fact, deprived the American people of the guidance and government of great statesmen, just when these were most required. It is not too much to say that, under the American Constitution, there was no *opportunity* for a great statesman. As we have seen, he had no chance of being chosen President; the artificial clauses of the Constitution, and the natural principles of human nature, have combined to prevent that. Nor is it worth a great man's while to be a President's minister. This is not because such a minister would be in apparent subordination to the President, who would probably be an inferior man to him,—for able men are continually ready to fill subordinate posts under constitutional monarchs, who are usually very inferior men, and even under colonial governors, who are rather inferior men,—but because a President's minister has no parliamentary career. As we know, the first member of the Crown is with us the first man in Parliament, and is the ruler of the English nation. In those English colonies which possess popular constitutions, the first minister is the most powerful man in the State,—far more powerful than the so-called governor. He is so because he is the accepted leader of the colonial Parliament. In consequence, whenever the English nation, or a free English colony, is in peril, the first man in England, or in the colony, at least the most trusted man, is raised at once to the most powerful place in the nation. On the Continent of Europe, the advantage of this insensible machinery is just beginning to be understood. Count Cavour well knew and thoroughly showed how far the power of a parliamentary Premier, supported by a willing and confiding parliament, is superior to all other political powers, whether in despotic governments or in free. The American Constitution, however, expressly prohibits the possibility of such a position. It enacts, "That no person holding any office under the United States shall be a member of either House during his continuance in office." In consequence, the position of a great parliamentary member who is responsible more or less for the due performance of his own high administrative functions, and also of all lesser ones, is in America an illegal one. If a politician has executive authority, he cannot enter Parliament; if he is in Parliament, he cannot possess executive authority. No man of great talents and high ambition has therefore under the Constitution of the United States a proper sphere for those talents, or a suitable vista for that ambition. He cannot hope to be President, for the President is *ex officio* a poor creature; he cannot hope to be, *mutatis mutandis*, an English Premier, to be a Sir R. Peel, or a Count Cavour, for the American law has declared that in the United States there shall be no similar person.

It appears that the Constitution-makers of North America were not unnaturally misled by the political philosophy of their day. It was laid down first that the legislative authority and the executive authority *ought* to be perfectly distinct; and secondly that in the English Constitution those authorities *were* so distinct. Both dogmas had slid into accepted axioms, and no one was bold enough to contest them. At that time no speculative politician perfectly comprehended that the essence of the English Constitution resided in the English Cabinet; that so far from the executive power being entirely distinct from the legislative power, the primary motive force, the supreme regulator of every thing, was precisely the same in both. A select committee of the legislature chosen by the legislature is the highest administrative body, and exercises all the powers of the sovereign executive that are tolerated by the law. The advantage of this arrangement, though contrary to a very old philosophical theory, is very great. The whole State will never work in harmony and in vigour while by possibility its two great powers—the power of legislating and the power of acting—can be declared in opposition to one another; and if they are independent, they will very often be in open antagonism, and be always in dread of it when they are not so. No government, it may be safely said, can be so strong as it should be when the enacting legislature and the acting executive are not subjected to a *single* effectual control.

The framers of the American Constitution did not perceive this cardinal maxim. The admitted theory of that day was that the English Constitution was one of “checks and balances;” and the Americans, who were very willing to take it as their model (the monarchical part excepted), hoped to balance their strong independent legislature by a strong independent executive. They hoped, too, to prevent the introduction into America of that parliamentary corruption—that bribery of popular representatives by money and patronage, which filled so large a space in the thoughts of politicians of the last century, and so large a space in the lives of some of them. But though their intentions were excellent and their reasons plausible, the effect of their regulations has been pernicious. By keeping the two careers of legislation and of administration distinct, they have rendered the life of a high politician, of a great statesman, aspiring to improve the laws and to regulate the policy of a great country, with them an impossibility. They have divided the greatest department of practical life into two halves, and neither of them is worth a man’s having.

We see the effect. There is no body of respected statesmen in America at this moment of their extreme need. It is not a

fault that they have no great genius at their head. The few marvellous statesmen of the world are of necessity rare, and are not manufactured to order even by the bidding of an awful crisis. But it is a fault that they have not one or more possible parliamentary cabinets—several sets of trained men, with considerable abilities and known character, whose policy is decided, whose worth is tried, who have cast in their lot for years with certain ideas, whose names are respected in every household through Europe. In consequence of the unfortunate caution of their Constitution-makers, America has no such men; and Italy has them, or will soon have them; but after a political experience of seventy years the United States have none. They have existed during two generations as a democracy without ideals; and are likely to die now a democracy without champions.

It is, however, only fair to observe, that the American Constitution has one great excellence at this moment, not, indeed, as compared with the English Constitution, but as compared with that degraded imitation of it which exists, for example, in our Australian Colonies. In those governments the parliament is wholly unfit to choose an executive; it has not patriotism enough to give a decent stability to the government; there are "ministerial crises" once a week, and actual changes of administration once a month. The suffrage has been lowered to such a point among the refuse population of the gold colonies, that representative government is there a very dubious blessing, if not a certain and absolute curse. If such a parliament had met in such a crisis as the American Congress lately had to face, it is both possible and probable that no stable administration would have been formed at all. Every possible ministry would have been tried in succession; and every one would have been rejected in succession. We might have witnessed debates as aimless, as absurd, as unpractical in their tenor, as those of certain French Parliaments, without the culture and refinement which made the latter more tolerable, though it could not make them more wise.

The American Constitution has at least the merit of preventing this last extreme of political degradation. Having placed Mr. Lincoln, though certainly an unknown and probably an inferior man, in power, it has at least prevented his being superseded, or its being proposed that he should be superseded, by some other equally unknown and equally inferior man. The American Constitution probably necessitated the choice of some second-rate person for the first position at an awful crisis; but it has at least settled once for all who he should be; it has compelled a conclusive choice, which an Australian Constitution would not have done.

But with this single item the aid which the American Constitution has given to Mr. Lincoln in his presidency begins and ends. It has put him there, and it has kept him there; but it has done no more. He has had to carry on the government with new subordinates; for at every change of the American President, all the officials, from the cabinet minister to the petty post-master, are changed. So far from giving him any special powers suitable to a civil war; it authoritatively declares that the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed; that it shall be illegal "to abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble or to petition for a redress of grievance." It does not permit the punishment of any person, or the confiscation of his property, except after satisfactory proof before a civil tribunal. Even now, at this early state of the civil contest, martial law has been declared in Missouri and *habeus corpus* suspended in Baltimore; the property (slave-property, certainly, but still legal property in America) of Secessionists has been confiscated; the liberty of speech is almost at an end; the liberty of the press has ceased to exist. These last are indeed infractions of the law, not by the administration, but by the mob; it is they, and not Mr. Lincoln, who have burnt printers' offices and proscribed dissentient individuals. But Mr. Lincoln and his ministers have broken, and have been obliged to break, the law on almost innumerable occasions, because that law provided no suitable procedure for the extreme contingency of a great civil war. The framers of the Constitution shrank naturally, and perhaps not unwisely, from providing against such an incalculable peril. They may have not unreasonably feared that they might augment the probability of such a calamity by recognising its possibility, even in order to provide against it. But their omission must have been grievously lamented by those who have had now to violate the law, for it may hereafter expose them to imminent danger. The English Parliament, in such an emergency, could and would condone every well-intentioned and beneficial irregularity by an act of indemnity. But the American Congress cannot do so. Its powers are limited powers, defined by the letter of a document; and in that document there is nothing to authorise a bill of indemnity—nor, indeed, could there be consistently with the very nature of it. By its fundamental conception, the States should relinquish certain special powers to the Federal Government, and *those powers only*; if the Federal Government could pass a bill of indemnity for infractions of the law, it would have absolute power; it would be a generally sovereign body, like the King, Lords, and Commons of England; it would have over the States of America,

and over their people, not a defined and limited superiority, but an uncontrolled and unlimited one. Mr. Lincoln is, therefore, in peril from the inseparable accidents of the office he holds; he is a President under a Constitution which could give him only defined powers, and he is in a position requiring indefinite powers; he has therefore had to take his life in his hand, and violate the law. At present, popular opinion approves of what he has done; but the Republican party, of which he is the head, has many bitter enemies. If his announced aim should be successful, and he should reëstablish the Union, those enemies will be reinforced by the whole constitutional power of the whole South, bitterly hostile to their vanquisher, bitterly aggrieved at the means by which they have been vanquished. Against such a coalition of enemies it will be difficult to defend the illegal, the arbitrary, the impeachable acts (for such, in the eye of American law, they are) of which Mr. Lincoln has been guilty. We doubt much whether he can succeed in compelling the South to return to the Union; but if he should, he will have succeeded *at his peril*.

It is easy to sum up the results of this long discussion. We cannot regard the American Constitution with the deference and the admiration with which all Americans used to regard it, and with which many Northern Americans still regard it. We admit that it has been beneficial to the American Republic as a bond of union; it has prevented war, it has fostered commerce, it has made them a nation to be *counted with*. But it always contained the seeds of disunion. There is no chance of saving such a polity when many States wish to separate from it, for the simple reason that its whole action essentially depends on the voluntary union of all, or of nearly all, the States. So far from its being wonderful that the present rupture has happened now, it is rather wonderful that it did not happen long since. It is rather surprising that a Government, which in practice, though not in theory, is dependent on the precarious consent of many distinct bodies, should have lasted so long, than that it should break asunder now. We see, too, that the American Constitution was, in its very essence, framed upon an erroneous principle. Its wise founders wished to guard against the characteristic evils of democracy; but they relied for this purpose upon ingenious devices and superficial subtleties. They left the essence of the government unchanged; they left the sovereign people, sovereign still. As has been shown in detail, the effect has been calamitous. Their ingenuities have produced painful evils, and aggravated great dangers; but they have failed of their intended purpose,—they have neither refined the polity, nor restrained the people.

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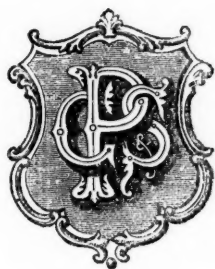
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